

HISTORICAL VIEW
OF THE
LITERATURE
OF THE
SOUTH OF EUROPE;

BY

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V I E W
OF
T H E L I T E R A T U R E
OF THE
SOUTH OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER XXI.

Alfieri and his school continued.

THE publication of Alfieri's first four tragedies was, perhaps, the greatest epoch in the literary history of Italy, during the eighteenth century. Up to that period the nation, contented with their languid love-plots and effeminate dramas, considered the rules of dramatic composition to be firmly established, and the boundaries of the art for ever stationary at the point at which their tragic writers had fixed them; attributing the fatigue which they felt during the representation of pieces, which had no attractions to rivet their attention, to the want of poetical talents in the authors, and not to the false idea which they

themselves had formed of the art. The sudden appearance of four compositions so novel, elevated, and austere, immediately led to an enquiry into the essence of the dramatic art. Alfieri attempted to throw off the disgraceful yoke, under which, in Italy, the human intellect laboured, and every high-minded Italian, who lamented over the humiliation of his country, was united to him by the bonds of mutual sympathy. Thus was the taste for the noblest species of tragedy mingled with the love of glory and of liberty. The theatre, which had been so long considered the school of intrigue, of languor, of effeminacy, and of servility, was now regarded by the first Italians as the only nurse of mental vigour, of honour, and of public virtue. Their critics at last dared, with noble pride, to turn their eyes to the dramatic writers of other nations, whose superiority had long been a humiliating reflection. Though divided in opinion upon the laws and the essence of the drama, they all united in applauding the elevation, the nobleness, and the energy of Alfieri's sentiments; and opinions, which, till that time, had been banished from Italy, burst forth at once, like the long suppressed voice of public feeling. Even within the narrower boundaries of the critical art, we are astonished at the profundity and variety of knowledge which were at this period displayed by men whose talents had been hitherto unknown, and who

would never have exercised any influence over the national spirit, unless some great genius like Alfieri had prepared the way for them. Thus we find in a letter from Renier de Calsabigi to Alfieri, an acquaintance with the ancient drama, with that of France and England, and with the defects peculiar to each, which we could scarcely have expected from a Neapolitan.

The labours of these critics produced an effect on the mind of Alfieri, which is manifested in his subsequent works. The four tragedies which he first published were only a small portion of the number which remained in his desk. At three different periods he successively submitted these tragedies to the judgment of the public. In the interval between these publications, he observed the general impression which they produced, and with the assistance of some of his friends performed the dramas himself, exposing them, by every means in his power, to the test of theatrical representation, which could scarcely be done in Italy in a satisfactory manner. He gradually reformed his style, and adapted his compositions, by new corrections, to the general taste. His dramas were thus distributed into three classes, distinguished by the period of their publication, as well as by the various alterations which they had undergone in consequence of the successive changes in the author's system.

At the same time with the *Philip*, which was

published in 1783, appeared *Polynices*, *Antigone*, which is a sequel to the latter, and *Virginia*. The three latter dramas, which display beauties of the first order, have, in common with the *Philip*, a certain hardness of style, and exhibit traces of the author's original acerbity, notwithstanding all the pains which he took to correct that fault in the later editions. They resemble each other still more in the author's obstinate attachment to his system; in the stiffness of the action, in the bitterness of the sentiments, and in the baldness both of the action and the poetry. In the last of these dramas the attachment of Alfieri to the laws of unity has led him into a strange error. The murder of Virginia by her father rouses the people, and at the same time enrages Appius Claudius. The people cry to arms, and exclaim: "Appius is a tyrant—let him perish!" Alfieri, thinking that his tragedy, being entitled *Virginia*, necessarily terminated with the death of his heroine, lets the curtain drop upon the people and the lictors in the midst of the conflict, so that the audience is ignorant of the result, and whether Appius or the people triumph. To leave any action unfinished at the conclusion of a drama, is a gross violation of the unity; for it induces every one to believe that such action was totally independent of the unity. The rigorous notions which compelled the author to let the curtain fall exactly ten lines after the

death of Virginia, are still more out of place, when we consider that Appius is almost as important a personage as she, and that his danger and destruction, by which Virginia is avenged, and her death is justified, complete the essential action of the poem.

Amongst the tragedies of Alfieri, of the second period, we shall select the *Agamemnon*, in order to give some idea of a Greek drama of four characters, the interest of which does not arise from political events. The scene, which is laid in the palace of Argos, opens with a very beautiful soliloquy of Ægisthus, who imagines himself pursued by the shade of Thyestes, demanding vengeance. This he promises. Born in shame, the offspring of infamy and incest, he believes himself called upon by destiny to commit the crime. Hour after hour, he awaits the return of the conqueror of Troy, and he promises the shade of his father to immolate him and his family. Clytemnestra seeks him, wishing to divert those painful thoughts which are so plainly depicted on his countenance. Ægisthus only speaks to her of his approaching departure, and of the necessity of avoiding the sight of the son of Atreus, the enemy of his race. He can bear neither his anger nor his contempt, and to the one or the other he is sensible that he must be exposed. He thus wounds the pride which Clytemnestra feels in the object of her love, and excites and directs against Agamem-

non, the irritation of his delirious spouse. Clytemnestra at last beholds in Agamemnon only the murderer of Iphigenia. She calls to mind with bitterness that horrible sacrifice, and trembles at the name of such a father. All her affections are concentrated in Ægisthus and her children, and she loves to think that Ægisthus will be a more tender father than Agamemnon to Electra and to Orestes. Electra approaches, and Clytemnestra, in order to speak with her, prevails upon Ægisthus to leave them.

Electra relates the various reports which have spread through Argos, respecting the Grecian fleet. Some assert that contrary winds have driven it back to the mouth of the Bosphorus; others, that it has been shipwrecked on the rocks; while others again believe that they see the sails near the shores. Clytemnestra demands with sarcastic bitterness, whether the gods wish that another of her children should be sacrificed for the return of Agamemnon, even as one perished on his departure. The character of Electra is admirable throughout. All her speeches are full of tenderness, respect, and devotion to her father, and of affection and deep pity for her mother's aberration. She hints to her cautiously and sorrowfully, that she is aware of her fresh dislike to Agamemnon, and that the Court and the public, as well as herself, are acquainted with the cause of it.

•

Beloved mother,
 What art thou doing? I do not believe
 That a flagitious passion fires thy breast.
 Involuntary fondness, sprung from pity,
 Which youth, especially when 'tis unhappy,
 Is apt to inspire, these, mother, are the baits
 By which, without thyself suspecting it,
 Thou hast been caught. Thou hast not hitherto
 Each secret impulse rigorously examined:
 A bosom conscious of its rectitude
 Hardly admits suspicion of itself;
 And here, perchance, there is no ground for it;
 Perchance thy fame thou yet hast scarcely sullied,
 Much less thy virtue, and there still is time
 To make atonement with one easy step.—
 Ah! by the sacred shade, so dear to thee,
 Of thy devoted daughter; by that love
 Which thou hast ever shewn and felt for me—
 That love of which to-day I am not unworthy;*

* O amata madre,
 Che fai? Non credo io, no, che ardente fiamma
 Il cor ti avvampi; involontario affetto
 Misto a pietà, che giovinezza inspira
 Quando infelice ell'è, son questi gli ami,
 A cui, senza avvedertene, sei presa.
 Di te, finor, chiesto non hai severa
 Ragione a tè; di sua virtù non cade
 Sospetto in cor conscio a se stesso; e forse
 Loco non ha: forse offendesti a pena
 Non il tuo onor, ma, del tuo onor la fama.
 E in tempo sei, ch' ogni tuo lieve cenno
 Sublime ammenda esser ne può. Per l'ombra
 Sacra, a te cara, della uccisa figlia;
 Per quell' amor che a me portasti, ond' io

How can I more persuasively adjure thee?
 By thy son's life, Orestes' life, I pray thee
 Pause on the brink of this tremendous gulf;
 Beloved mother, pause. Afar from Argos
 Banish Ægisthus: stop malignant tongues
 By thy deportment: with thy children weep
 The hardships of Atrides, and frequent
 With them the sacred temples of the Gods
 To implore his swift return.—

Clytemnestra is moved; she weeps, she accuses herself, and she likewise accuses the blood of Leda which runs through her veins; and the momentary flash of truth which passes across her mind, whilst it fails to convince her, fills her with terror.

At the beginning of the second act Ægisthus and Clytemnestra dispute upon the steps most expedient to be taken. The ships of Agamemnon now enter the port. He lands and advances towards the palace, upon which Ægisthus proposes to make his escape; but Clytemnestra, mad with love, will listen to no advice, nor see any danger. If prudence bids her lasten the

Oggi indegna non son; che più? Ten priego
 Per la vita d'Oreste; O madre, arretra,
 Arretra il piè dal precipizio orrendo.
 Lunge dà noi codesto Egisto vada:
 Fà che di tè si taccia: in un con noi
 Piangi d'Atride i casi: ai templi vieni
 Il suo ritorno ad implorar dai numi,

flight of her lover, it is her part, she says, to fly with him, like Helen. Ægisthus, who beseeches her to suffer him to depart, endeavours, by the apprehension of his absence, to add fuel to her love and jealousy. He, in fact, wishes to be prevented from going, and Clytemnestra begs him to remain a single day, exacting an oath from him that he will not quit the walls of Argos before the ensuing dawn. He consents, and Electra appearing, begs her mother to fly to the king. Clytemnestra, instead of answering her daughter, solemnly requests Ægisthus to repeat his oath; and this appeal, which she again makes at the end of the scene, after Electra has manifested her aversion for Ægisthus, and the dread with which his stay inspires her, fully displays all Clytemnestra's passion, and makes the spectators shudder. Ægisthus, being left alone, rejoices that his victims have at length fallen into his snares, and again promises the shade of Thyestes to avenge upon Agamemnon and his children the execrable repast of Atreus. He at length retires on beholding the approach of Agamemnon, accompanied by Electra and Clytemnestra, and surrounded by the soldiers and the people.

Alfieri has skilfully delineated in Agamemnon the tender feelings of a good king returning to his people, of a patriot restored to his country, and of a kind father again embracing his family :

At last I see the wished-for walls of Argos:
 This ground which now I tread is the loved spot
 Where once I wandered with my infant feet.
 All that I see around me are my friends ;—
 My wife, my daughter, and my faithful people,
 And you, ye household gods, whom I at last
 Return to worship.—What have I to wish ?
 What does there now remain for me to hope ?
 How long and tedious do ten years appear
 Spent in a foreign country, far from all
 The heart holds dear ! With what profound delight,
 After the labours of a bloody war,
 Shall I repose ? Oh home, beloved asylum,
 Where peace alone awaits us, with what joy
 Thee I revisit ! But am I, alas !
 The only one that tastes of comfort here ?
 My wife, my daughter ! silently ye stand
 Fixing upon the ground unquietly
 Your conscious eyes ? O heaven, do ye not feel*

- * Riveggio al fin le sospirate mura
 D'Argo mia : quel ch'io premo, è il suolo amato,
 Che nascendo calcai : quanti al mio fianco
 Veggo, amici mi son ; figlia, consorte,
 Popol mio fido, e voi, Penati Dei,
 Cui finalmente ad adorar pur torno.
 Che più bramar, che più sperare omai
 Mi resta, o lice ? Oh come lunghi, e gravi
 Son due lustri vissuti in strania terra
 Lungi da quanto s'ama ! Oh quanto è dolce
 Ripatriar, dopo gli affanni tanti
 Di sanguinosa guerra ! Oh vero porto
 Di tutta pace, esser tra suoi !—Ma, il solo
 Son io, che goda quì ? Consorte, figlia,
 Voi taciturne state, a terra incerto
 Fissando il guardo irrequieto ? Oh cielo !

A joy that equals mine in being thus
Restored to my embrace ?

Clytemnestra is agitated, and Electra is in fear for her ; but her presence of mind is restored by the very sound of her own voice ; and as she proceeds her answers become more intelligible. Agamemnon himself alludes to the misfortune which has deprived him of his other daughter, and which he regards as a divine ordinance to which his paternal heart is yet unable to bow.

Oft in my helmet bonnetted I wept
In silence: but, except the father, none
Were conscious of these tears.*

He enquires for Orestes, and longs to embrace him. He asks whether he has yet entered upon the paths of virtue ; and whether, when he hears of glorious achievements, or beholds a brandished sword, his eyes do not sparkle with ardour.

Agamemnon and Electra appear at the commencement of the third act ; and the king enquires from his daughter what is the cause of the singular change which he has remarked in Clytemnestra. He is less surprised at her first silence than at the studied and constrained

Pari alla gioia mia non è la vostra,
Nel ritornar fra le mie braccia ?

* Io spesso

Chiuso nell' elmo, in silenzio piangeva,
Ma, nol sapea, che il padre.

manner in which she afterwards addressed him. Electra, compelled to give some reason for this change, attributes it to the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and thus gives Agamemnon an opportunity of exculpating himself to the audience from all the odium which that sacrifice had cast upon him. He then asks how it happens that the son of Thyestes is in Argos. He is astonished at learning that fact for the first time on his arrival, and he perceives that every one mentions his name with repugnance. Electra replies that Ægisthus is unfortunate, but that Agamemnon will judge better than she can whether he is worthy of pity. Ægisthus is afterwards brought before him, and informs him that the hatred and jealousy of his brothers have driven him from his country. He represents himself as a proscribed suppliant; he flatters Agamemnon to obtain his favour; he is humble without debasing himself, and treacherous without creating disgust. Agamemnon reminds him of the family enmities, which should have induced him to look for an asylum in any other place than in the palace of Atreus :

* Hitherto, Ægisthus,

Thou wert, and still thou art, to me unknown ;
I neither hate nor love thee ; yet, though willing

* Egisto, a me tu fosti

E sei finora ignoto, per te stesso :
Io non t'odio, ne t'amo ; eppur, bench' io

To lay aside hereditary discord,
 I cannot, without feeling in my breast,
 I know not what of strange and perplex'd feeling,
 Behold the countenance, nor hear the voice
 Of one that is the offspring of Thyestes.

As Ægisthus, however, implores his protection, he promises to employ his influence amongst the Greeks in his favour, but he commands him to leave Argos before the morrow. As Ægisthus leaves the king, Clytemnestra enters. She is much agitated, and fears lest her husband has discovered her inconstancy. She rejects the consolatory attentions of her daughter, and the hope which she had endeavoured to excite in her breast, that it was still possible for her to return to the paths of duty. At length she retires to indulge her melancholy reflections in solitude.

The fourth act opens with a conversation between Clytemnestra and Ægisthus. Ægisthus takes leave of the queen, who abandons herself to the impetuosity of her passion. This scene, which leads to such fatal consequences, is managed with infinite art. Ægisthus, while he appears submissive, tender, and despairing, aims only at instilling poison into the heart of his

Voglia in disparte por gli odi nefandi,
 Senza provar non sò qual moto in petto,
 No, mirar non poss'io, nè udir la voce, °
 La voce pur, del figlio di Tieste.

victim. She despises infamy and danger. She wishes to follow him, to fly with him. He, however, shews her the folly of her projects, and the impossibility of executing any of them. He represents himself as surrounded with dangers, and her as lost; and for a long time he refuses to mention any means of avoiding the evil. At last he tells her that one resource remains, though an unworthy one.

ÆGIS. Another step, perhaps, e'en now remains,
But unbecoming—

CLY. And it is?—

ÆGIS. Too cruel.

CLY. But certain—

ÆGIS. Certain! ah, too much so!

CLY. How

Canst thou then hide it from me?

ÆGIS. How canst thou
Of me demand it?*

Clytemnestra still hesitates; she wavers; she considers all the pretended causes of hatred towards Agamemnon; all her own and her lover's

* EGIST....Altro partito, forse, or ne rimane.....
Ma indegno....

CLIT. Ed è?

EGIST. { Crudo.

CLIT. { Ma certo.

EGIST. Ah! certo

Pur troppo!...

CLIT. E a me tu il celi?

EGIST. E a me tu il chiedi.

dangers; and she then asks what other step she can take; to which Ægisthus answers—None. But as he utters this word, the dark glaring of his eyes at once informs the queen that he thirsts for the blood of Agamemnon. Clytemnestra tremblingly strengthens herself to commit the crime, and Ægisthus chooses that moment to tell her that the king has brought Cassandra with him, that she is his mistress, and that he intends speedily to sacrifice his wife to her. The approach of Electra compels the guilty pair to separate. She perceives with terror the agitation of her mother, and forebodes the crimes of Ægisthus. She beseeches the king to dismiss him immediately. Agamemnon attributes her terror to the hereditary enmity between the blood of Atreus and of Thyestes, and feels that he would be wanting in hospitality, if he should hasten the banishment of an unfortunate stranger. He then consults Clytemnestra, who, at the very name of Ægisthus, betrays the most extreme emotion. Demanding the cause of her disturbance, he laments with her the death of Iphigenia, and attempts, but in vain, to dissipate her suspicions respecting Cassandra.

At the commencement of the fifth act Clytemnestra appears alone with a poniard in her hand. She has bound herself by an oath to shed the blood of her husband, and she prepares to perpetrate the crime; but, in the absence of Ægis-

thus, remorse attacks her. She is shocked at the enterprise, and casts away the dagger; when Ægisthus again making his appearance, rekindles her fury. He informs her that Agamemnon is acquainted with their love, and that on the morrow they must appear before that stern judge, when death and infamy will be their portion if Atrides is suffered to live. Persuading her to persevere, he arms her with a more deadly dagger; with that which sacrificed the sons of Thyestes. He hurries her into the apartment of her husband, and invokes the shade of Thyestes to enjoy the infernal revenge which is to be accomplished by the wife of the son of Atreus. During this terrible invocation the cries of Agamemnon are heard, who recognizes his wife as he dies. Of Clytemnestra, who returns to the stage distracted, Ægisthus takes no notice, whilst the palace resounds with terrific cries. Ægisthus perceives that the time is now come when it is necessary to shew himself in his true colours, and to gather the fruit of his protracted hypocrisy. He determines to murder Orestes and to mount the throne of Atreus. Electra, rushing in, accuses Ægisthus of the crime; but seeing her mother armed with a bloody poniard, she recognizes with horror the true assassin. She seizes the dagger, in order to preserve it for Orestes, whom she has placed in a safe retreat. The horrid truth now flashes upon Clytemnestra's mind;

she sees that Ægisthus has been gratifying his hatred and not his love, and she flies after him to preserve the life of her son.

Agamemnon was published by Alfieri at the end of the year 1783, with five other tragedies, *Orestes*, *Rosmunda*, *Octavia*, *Timoleon*, and *Merope*. The *Orestes* is a continuation of *Agamemnon*, with an interval of ten years, and the drama opens on the anniversary of the murder of the king. The action from the commencement of the piece is more violent; the hate nourished by the virtuous characters is more atrocious; and Alfieri thought that he had adopted a subject more conformable to his talents. The result, however, was in contradiction to that idea. In order to affect the feelings, it was quite necessary for him to mingle at least some portion of tenderness with the natural acerbity of his genius; but, by a total abandonment of it, he fatigues the spectators with a representation of uninterrupted rage. Electra, Ægisthus, Clytemnestra, and Orestes, seem to be always prepared to tear one another to pieces. The fury of the latter is so unceasing and approaches so nearly to madness, that we can easily comprehend how it was possible for him in the last act to murder his mother without knowing her. This fury is too monotonous to excite any interest. Rosmunda, a Queen of the Lombards, who put her husband, Alboino, to death, in order to revenge the murder of her father

Cunimond, has furnished Alfieri with the subject of another of his tragedies. This drama, which was in the highest favour with the author, has enjoyed very little success with the public. The two female characters, Rosmunda, and Romilda, the daughter of Alboino by a former wife, both of them driven on by the most furious spirit of revenge, are engaged from the opening of the drama in a war of hatred and outrage, which disgusts the spectator. All the characters share in this tedious combat. Almachilda and Ildovaldo emulously vituperate each other and Rosmunda, who, in her turn, attacks them and Romilda. Nature, the true gradation of the passions, and theatrical effect, are alike sacrificed to this universal fury. The subject of the drama is not Rosmunda's first crime, but is entirely the author's own invention, in which he has been by no means happy; for the plot is not natural, and the developement resembles that of a romance. The two tragedies of *Octavia* and *Timoleon* both appear to me to be open to the objection of exaggeration. In the first, the vices of the characters, and in the second, their virtues, are on too gigantic a scale. Neither the madness of Nero, nor the fratricide of Timoleon, although it restored liberty to Corinth, is, in my opinion, a fit subject for the drama. *Merope* is the last piece of the second class, and, perhaps, the best. It is at once interesting and correct in feeling. It

is remarkable as being a completely new conception, notwithstanding the *Merope* of Maffei and of Voltaire. The coincidence in the subject may render an analysis of it uninteresting, and they who wish to compare the three dramas should read them entire.

Amongst the tragedies which made their first appearance in the third edition, I shall select *Saul* as affording the best extracts. This play, which was a favourite with the author, has likewise maintained its place upon the stage. The naked and austere style of Alfieri suited well with the patriarchal times which are there represented. We do not require the first King of Israel to be surrounded by a numerous court, or to act solely by the intervention of his ministers. We cannot forget that he was a shepherd-king. On the other hand, in this drama, Alfieri occasionally indulges in an oriental richness of expression, and indeed it is the first of his tragedies in which the language is habitually poetical.

At the first dawn of day, David, clothed in the habit of a common soldier, appears alone at Gilboa, between the camp of the Hebrews and that of the Philistines. It is God who has led him thither; God, who has protected him from the pursuit and the frenzy of Saul; God, who has conducted him to his camp, in order to give fresh proofs of his obedience and his valour. Jonathan, coming forth from the tents of the king

to pray, finds his friend, and recognizes him by his hardihood. He tells him how his father Saul is tormented by an evil spirit, and how Abner, his lieutenant, takes advantage of this circumstance to sacrifice all whose merit has given him offence. He then informs him that Michal, the sister of Jonathan and the wife of David, is in the camp with Saul, her father, whom she is comforting and consoling in his afflictions, and from whom she has begged, in return, that he will restore David to her. He addresses David with a mixture of respect and love; regarding him both as the friend of his heart and as the messenger and favourite of God. The tender, faithful, and constant nature of David, is painted in the finest manner. The Lord triumphs over all his affections; but his enthusiasm, however exalted, does not extinguish the natural sentiments of his heart. Jonathan informs him that Michal will soon leave the tents, and join him in his morning prayers; and, as she approaches, he persuades David to conceal himself, in order that he may guard her against the surprise. Michal is a tender and suffering woman; she has no other thoughts but of David; all her fears and all her desires centre in him. As soon as Jonathan has prepared her to expect the return of her husband, David throws himself into her arms. They are all of opinion that David ought to present himself before Saul, previous to the battle which the

latter is about to fight with the Philistines; and that Michal and Jonathan shall prepare the way for his reception, while David himself awaits their instructions in a neighbouring cavern.

The second act opens with a scene between Saul and Abner. Saul is lamenting over his old age, the succour of the Almighty withheld from him, and the power of his enemies, with which he is deeply affected. His language is that of a noble but dejected soul. Abner attributes all the misfortunes of the king to David :

* Thou'rt deceived—

All my calamities may be referred
 To a more terrible cause.—And what? wouldst thou
 Conceal from me the horror of my state?
 Ah! were I not a father as I am,
 Alas! too certainly of much loved children,
 Would I now wish life, victory, or the throne?
 I should already, and a long time since,
 Headlong have cast myself 'mid hostile swords:
 I should already, thus at least, at once
 Have closed the horrible life that I drag on.

* Ah! no; deriva ogni sventura mia
 Da più terribil fonte!—E che? Celarmi
 L'orror vorresti del mio stato? Ah, s'io
 Padre non fossi, come il son, pur troppo!
 Di cari figli—or la vittoria e il regno,
 E la vita vorrei? Precipitoso
 Già mi sarei fra gl'inimici ferri
 Scagliato io, da gran tempo; avrei già tronca
 Così la vita orribile ch' io vivo.

How many years have now pass'd since a smile
 Was seen to play upon my lips? My children,
 Whom still I love so much, if they caress me,
 For the most part inflame my heart to rage:
 Impatient, fierce, incensed, and turbulent,
 I am a burthen to myself and others.
 In peace I wish for war, in war for peace:
 Poison conceal'd I drink in every cup—
 In every friend I see an enemy:
 The softest carpets of Assyria seem
 Planted with thorns to my unsolaced limbs:
 My transient sleep is agonized with fear—
 Each dream, with imaged terrors that distract me.
 Why should I add to this dark catalogue—
 Who would believe it?—The sonorous trumpet
 Speaks to my ears in an appalling voice,
 And fills the heart of Saul with deep dismay.
 Thou seest clearly that Saul's tottering house
 Is desolate, bereft of all its splendour;
 Thou seest that God hath cast me off for ever.

Quanti anni or son, che sul mio labro il riso
 Non fu visto spuntare? I figli miei
 Ch'amo pur tanto, le più volte all'ira
 Muovonmi il cor, se mi accarezzan—Fero,
 Impaziente, torbido, adirato
 Sempre; a me stesso incresco ognora e altrui;
 Bramo in pace far guerra, in guerra pace:
 Entro ogni nappo ascoso toscio io bevo;
 Scorgo un nemico in ogni amico; i molli
 Tappeti Assiri, ispidi dumi al fianco
 Mi sono; angoscia il breve sonno; i sogni
 Terror. Che più? Chi l'crederia? Spavento
 M'è la tromba di guerra; alto spavento
 E la tromba a Saul! vedi se è fatta
 Vedova omai di suo splendor la casa
 Di Saul; vedi, se omai Dio sta meco.

The character of Saul throughout the whole drama is consistent with the representation of it in this scene. He impetuously abandons himself to the most contrary passions, and the latest word which he hears awakens a new storm in his soul. He easily believes his glory tarnished and his power departing ; he menaces ; he punishes ; and his own fury appears to him a fresh instance of that divine vengeance under which he is perishing. Abner attributes his violence and his aberration of mind to the superstitious terrors which Samuel and the prophets of Rama have excited, and which the enthusiasm of David has nourished. Jonathan and Michal, who enter at this moment, entreat him, on the contrary, to believe that his power and glory are connected with the return of David, whom they announce as the messenger of God, and the pledge of divine protection. When the mind of Saul is thus warmed, David enters and throws himself at his feet. He calms by his submissive deportment the first burst of anger which his appearance has excited ; he repels the accusations of Abner, and proves that, far from laying snares for the king, he had his life in his power in the cave of En-jedi, where, while Saul was sleeping, he cut off a portion of his garment, which he now presents to him. Saul is convinced ; he calls David his son, and commends him to the love of Michal as a recompense for his sufferings. He then commits to him the command of the army, and begs him to arrange the order of the approaching battle.

At the commencement of the third act, Abner gives an account to David of the order of battle which he had proposed when he conceived himself to be sole general. He mingles some bitter irony with his report, which David treats with noble coldness: The latter approves of the military dispositions, and confides the execution of them to Abner, mingling praises of his valour with the counsels which he gives him. Scarcely has Abner departed, when Michal appears, to inform her husband that the general, having seen Saul, has awakened with a single word all his former fury. She fears that David will again be forced to fly, and she swears to accompany him in his exile. Saul now appears with Jonathan, and displays symptoms of strong insanity :

* Who, who are ye? Who speaks of pure air here?
 This? 'tis a thick impenetrable gloom,
 A land of darkness, and the shades of death.
 Ah, see! more nearly it approaches me—
 A fatal wreath of blood surrounds the sun—
 Heard'st thou the death-notes of ill-omen'd birds?
 With loud laments the vocal air resounds

* Chi sete voi?—Chi d' aura aperta e pura.
 Qui favella?—Questa? è caligin densa,
 Tenebre sono; ombra di morte—Oh mira;
 Più mi t' accosta; il vedi? Il sol d'intorno
 Cinto ha di sangue ghirlanda funesta—
 Odi tu canto di sinistri augelli?
 Lugubre un pianto sull' aere si spande,

That smite my ears, compelling me to weep ;
But what, do ye weep also ?

He then asks for David, and reproaches him in turns for his pride (for deep jealousy is the true madness of Saul), and for the enthusiastic tone in which he speaks of God ; since the Divinity is his enemy, and his praises are insults to Saul. He is astonished at beholding the sword which David had taken from Goliah, and which had been afterwards dedicated to God in the tabernacle of Nob, and he becomes furious when he learns that Abimelech has restored this sword to David. But even this fury exhausts itself. He relents ; he melts into tears ; and Jonathan invites David to seize upon this moment to calm the frenzy of the king by his songs and his harp. David sings or recites some lyrical effusions, of which he changes the metre according to the subject, to suit the temper of Saul's mind. He first implores the protection of God ; then he sings of martial glory in the stanza of the canzoni ; but, upon Saul exclaiming, that these are the songs of his youth, and that henceforward relaxation, oblivion, and peace must be the portion of his old age, David sings the hymn of peace in harmonious and tender strains. Saul is angry with himself that he can be moved by such effeminate compositions,

Che me percuote, e a lagrimar mi sforza—
Ma che ? Voi pur, voi pur piangete ?—

and David again commences his war-song. In animated dithyrambic verse he paints the glory of Saul in his battles, and represents himself as marching in his footsteps. This allusion to another warrior exasperates Saul; in his fury he attempts to transfix the minstrel who has dared to introduce the mention of another's exploits, and David escapes with difficulty, while Jonathan and Michal restrain the anger of the king.

At the commencement of the fourth act, Michal enquires from Jonathan, whether David may yet return to her father's tent, but she is told that although the frenzy of the king has passed away, his anger still remains. Saul then enters, and orders Michal to go in search of David. Abner accuses the latter, the general of the king's choice, with being absent in the hour of battle, and brings Abimelech, the high priest, whom he had discovered in the camp, before the monarch. At the sight of him, all Saul's fury against the Levites is again awakened, and on learning his name, he charges him with having dared to grant protection to David, and with having restored to him the sword of Goliah. Abimelech answers him with all the haughtiness of an enthusiast; menaces him with the vengeance of God, which is suspended above his head; and irritates, instead of intimidating him. Saul recalls the cruelty of the priests, and the death of the king of the Amalekites, who, after having been made prisoner,

was put to death by Samuel ; and he gives back menace for menace. He orders Abimelech to be led to death, and commands a detachment of his troops to proceed to Nob, to destroy the race of priests and prophets, to burn their abodes, and to put to the sword their mothers, their wives, and their children, their slaves, and their flocks. He changes the whole order of battle, which had been determined upon in concert with David, and he resolves to commence the engagement on the ensuing dawn. He repulses Jonathan, who entreats him not to incur the sin of this sacrilegious act ; he repulses Michal, who returns without David ; and he declares that if David is seen in the battle, all the swords of Israel shall be turned against him. Shunning every one, he exclaims,

I to myself am left—myself alone,
Unhappy king ! myself alone,[†] dread not.

The fifth act commences with Michal leading David from his retreat. She informs him that dangers are closing round him, and entreats him to fly and bear her along with him. David wishes to remain to fight with his countrymen, and to perish in battle ; but as soon as he hears that the blood of the priests has been shed, that the camp is polluted, and the ground stained with it, he acknowledges that he can never combat in this place, and resolves to fly. He is, however, unwilling to carry away with him a daughter who is her

father's sole consolation, or to impede his course through the deserts, as he necessarily must if she accompanies him. He therefore supplicates and commands her to remain. Their separation is tender and touching, and David takes his lonely way through the craggy passes of the mountains. Scarcely has he departed, when Michal hears the sounds of conflict at the extremity of the camp, and groans proceeding from the tent of her father. Saul is again furious; the excess of his delirium is redoubled by the remorse which oppresses him. He sees the shade of Samuel menacing him, of Abimelech, and of the victims slain at Nob. His way is on every side obstructed by the bodies of the dead and by carnage. He offers up his supplications and entreats that at least the anger of God may pass away from the heads of his children. His delirium is truly sublime, and the apparitions which torment him fill the imagination of the spectator. Suddenly the shadows disappear; he only hears the cry of battle which approaches nearer and nearer. He had resolved to engage the ensuing morning; but it is yet night, and the Philistines are within his camp. Abner arrives with a handful of soldiers, and wishes to carry the king to the mountains to a place of safety. The Philistines surprise the Israelites, and Jonathan perishes with all his brothers. The army is completely routed, and only a few mo-

ments' space remains for flight. Of this, Saul obstinately refuses to take advantage; he orders Abner to bear Michal to a place of safety, and forces her to leave him, and he then remains alone on the stage:

Oh my children,
 I was a father—See thyself alone,
 O King! Of thy so many friends and servants,
 Not one remains.—Inexorable God!
 Is thy retributory wrath appeased?
 But thou remain'st to me, O sword! Now come,
 My faithful servant in extremity.
 Hark! hark! the howlings of the insolent victors!
 The lightning of their burning torches glares
 Before my eyes already, and I see
 Their swords by thousands. Impious Philistine!
 Thou shalt find me, but like a king, here, dead.*

As he speaks these words he falls, transfixed by his own sword. The victorious Philistines surround him in a crowd, with blazing torches and bloody swords. While they are rushing with loud cries upon Saul, the curtain falls.

* Oh figli miei!—Fui padre!—
 Eccoti solo, O rè; non un ti resta
 Dei tanti amici, o servi tuoi.—Sei paga,
 D' inesorabil Dio terribil ira?—
 Ma tu mi resti, O brando, all' ultim' uopo.
 Fido ministro, or vieni.—Ecco, già gli urli
 Dell' insolente vincitor: sul ciglio
 Già lor fiaccole ardenti balenarmi
 Veggo, e le spade a mille.—Empio Filisteo,
 Me troverai, ma almen da rè, quì—mòrto.

This tragedy is essentially different from the other dramas of Alfieri. It is conceived in the spirit of Shakspeare, and not of the French drama. It is not a conflict between passion and duty, which furnishes the plot of this tragedy. We here find a representation of a noble character, suffering under those weaknesses which sometimes accompany the greatest virtues, and governed by the fatality not of destiny, but of human nature. There is scarcely any action in this piece. Saul perishes, the victim, not of his passions, not of his crimes, but of his remorse, augmented by the terror which a gloomy imagination has cast over his soul. He is the first heroic madman, who, if my memory be correct, has been introduced into the classical drama; while in the romantic theatre, Shakspeare and his followers have delineated with terrible truth this moral death, more shocking than our natural dissolution; this melancholy catastrophe in the drama of real life, which, though ennobled by the rank of its victim, is yet not confined to any one class, and, though exhibited to our eyes in the person of a king, menaces us all alike.

At the same time with *Saul*, appeared the eight last tragedies of Alfieri. In *Mary Stuart*, the scene is laid, not at the melancholy termination of her long captivity, but at the period when she entered into the conspiracy with Bothwell against her husband, and tarnished her

fame with the blood of the unfortunate Darnley. The conspiracy of the Pazzi in 1478 to restore liberty to Florence, is the subject of the second of these tragedies. The catastrophe is striking, and the situation of Bianca, the sister of the Medici and the wife of one of the Pazzi, distracted between her affection for her brothers and her husband, forms the chief interest of the drama. *Don Garcia* is a second tragedy drawn from the history of the Medici, after that ambitious family had gained possession of the sovereign power. Don Garcia, one of the sons of Cosmo I. was the instrument of the terrible vengeance of his father; by whose order he slew, with his own hand and in the obscurity of night, his brother whom he did not know, and was himself, in his turn, put to death by the tyrant. The fourth tragedy is *Agis*, king of Sparta, whom the Ephori put to death for attempting to augment the privileges of the people, and to place bounds to the power of the aristocracy. The plot of *Sophonisba* is the story of the mistress of Massinissa, who killed herself to avoid being led to Rome in triumph. The next tragedy is the *Elder Brutus*, who judged his own sons. The next, *Myrrha*, who died the victim of her sinful passions. The last of these dramas is founded on the story of the younger *Brutus*, the assassin of Cæsar. Amongst these latter tragedies we shall find Mary Stuart, the conspiracy of the Pazzi,

and the two Brutuses most worthy of our study and attention. We have already expended so much time on the theatre of Alfieri, that we cannot afford to give any more analyses; but we must not quit so celebrated an author without saying a few words upon his other works.

Previously to so doing, however, we shall, in order to terminate our history of the Italian Theatre, give some account of those tragedians who, succeeding Alfieri, took that great man for their model, and who share at this moment the Italian stage in common with him. The first of these is Vincenzo Monti of Ferrara, of whom we shall again speak in the next chapter, when we come to mention his epic compositions. His *Aristodemus* is one of the most affecting of all the Italian tragedies. This Messenian, who, to gain the suffrages of his fellow-citizens, and to attain the regal power, has voluntarily offered up his daughter as a sacrifice to the Gods, appears upon the stage, fifteen years after the commission of this crime, devoured with remorse at having outraged nature to serve his ambition. The union of this remorse with the heroism which he displays, in his public capacity, and with his affection towards another daughter, who has been long lost to him, and whom he believes to be a Spartan captive, affords ample opportunity for fine acting, and for producing strong emotion; but, in truth, there is very little action in the drama, which is filled with negotiations with the envoy of Sparta, entirely

foreign to the passions of the hero of the piece; and when at the conclusion he kills himself, his death is caused rather by his fifteen years of remorse, than by any thing which passes in the five acts of the tragedy. Yet we recognize the school of Alfieri in the loftiness of the characters, in the energy of the sentiments, in the simplicity of the action so devoid of incident, in the absence of all foreign pomp, and in the interest sustained without the assistance of love. We likewise remark the peculiar talent of Monti, in which he excelled Alfieri; his harmony, his elegance, and his poetical language, which, while they charm our minds, never fail to delight our ear.

Monti has written another tragedy, entitled *Galeotto Manfredi*; the subject of which is drawn from the Italian chronicles of the fifteenth century; a period so fertile in tyrants and in crimes. This Prince of Faenza, the victim of his wife's jealousy, was assassinated by her order and under her own eyes. In this drama, likewise, Monti approaches Alfieri in the nakedness of the action, in the energy of the characters, and in the eloquence of the sentiments. He has adhered but too closely to his model in his neglect of all local colouring. This national tragedy would possess many more charms, did it but present a lively picture to the spectators of the Italians of the middle age.*

* As a specimen of the talents of Monti, I have selected the scene in which Zambino excites Matilda to assassinate her

Some less celebrated authors also have profited by the precepts and the models which Alfieri be-

husband. The situation resembles that of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra, in the drama of Alfieri.

MATILD.

Meco ti vieta

Ogni colloquio il crudo, (*Manfredi*) e so ben io
Perchè lo vieta; accusator ti teme
De' tradimenti suoi, l'infame tresca
Tenermi occulta per tal modo, ei pensa.
Ben lo comprendo.

ZAMB.

Io taccio.

MATILD.

Ho d' uopo io forse

Che tu mel noti? Si; me sola intende
Il tiranno oltraggiar, quando mi priva
Dell' unico fedel, che raddolcirmi
Solea le pene, ed asciugarmi il pianto:
Ma ne sparsi abbastanza; or d'ira, in seno
Il cor cangiommi; ed ei con gli occhi ha rotta
Corrispondenza.

ZAMB.

Ah! Principessa, il cielo

M'è testimôn, che mi sgomenta solo
De' tuoi mali il pensiero; in me si sfoghi
Come più vuol Manfredi, e mi punisca
D' aver svelato alla tradita moglie
La nuova infedeltà; sommo delitto
Che sommo traditor mai non perdona.
Di tè duolmi infelice. Alla mia mente,
Funesto e truce, un avvenir s'affaccia
Che fa tremarmi il cuor sul tuo destino.
Tu del consorte, tu per sempre, O donna,
Hai perduto l'amor.

MATILD.

Ma non perduta

La mia vendetta; ed io l'avrò; pagarla
Dovessi a prezzo d'anima e di sangue;
Sì, compita l'avrò.

queathed to them. Amongst these we may mention Alessandro Pepoli of Bologna, an enthusiastic

ZAMB. Ma d'un ripudio
Meglio non fora tollerar l'affronto?

MATILD. Di ripudio che parli?

ZAMB. E chi potria
Campartene? Non vedi? Ei per Elisa
D'amor delira. Possederla in moglie,
Abbi sicuro che vi pensa, e due
Capirne il letto marital non puote.
A scacciarne te poscia; il suo dispetto
Fia di mezzi abbondante, e di pretesti.
L'odio d'entrambi, l'infecundo nodo,
D'un successor necessità, gran possa
Di forti amici, e basterà per tutti
Di Valentino l'amistà. Di Roma
L'oracolo fia poi mite e cortese,
Intercessore Valentino. E certo
Il trionfo d'Elisa.

MATILD. Anzi, la morte.
Vien meco.

ZAMB. E dove?

MATILD. A trucidarla.

ZAMB. Ignori
Che Manfredi è con lei? L'ho visto io stesso
Furtirvo entrarvi col favor dell' ombre,
E serrar l'uscio sospettoso e cheto.
Avvicinai l'orecchio, e tutto intorno
Era silenzio, e nulla intesi, e nulla
*Di più so dirti.

MATILD. Ah taci! Ogni parola
Mi drizza i crini, assai d'icesti, basta
Basta così, non proseguir...L'hai visto
Tu stesso, non è ver? Parla.

lover of the drama, who attempted, and sometimes imprudently, to make new discoveries in his art. He died young in the year 1796. He has imitated Alfieri not in the construction of his plot, but in his eloquence, his precision, and his laconic dialogues.*

ZAMB.

T'accheta :

Oh ! taciuto l'avessi !

MATILD.

Ebben, ti prego,

Tiriamo un velo, oh Dio ! Spalanca, O terra,
 Le voragini tue : quest' empi inghiotti
 Nel calor della colpa, e queste mura
 E l' intera città ; sorga una fiamma
 Che li divorì, e me con essi, e quanti
 Vi son ribaldi, che la fede osaro
 Del talamo tradir.

ZAMB.

(Pungi, prosegui

Demone tutelar, colmala tutta
 E testa e cuor, di rabbia e di veleno,
 E d'una crudeltà limpida, pura,
 Senza mistura di pietà.)

MATILD.

Spergiuro !

Barbaro ! finalmente io ti ringrazio
 Della tua reità. Così mi spogli
 Di qualunque rimorso. E tu dal fodro
 Esci, ferro di morte : a questa punta
 La mia vendetta raccomandando ; il tuo
 Snuda, Zambrino.

ZAMB.

T'obbedisco.

MATILD.

Andiamo.

Galeotto Manfredi, Atto v. Sc. 5.

* The following lines, from the commencement of his *Rotrude*, are evidently in the manner of Alfieri :—

But the most faithful of all the imitators of Alfieri is Giovanni Battista Niccolini, a Florentine by birth, who is very recently known in Italy as the author of a tragedy entitled *Polyxena*. From the worn-out materials of the ancient mythology, and the trite incident of a human sacrifice, he has formed a most beautiful tragedy, in which love is the conspicuous passion. Polyxena, the daughter of Priam, was, according to the tradition, the betrothed bride of Achilles at the period of his death, and was the victim immolated by Pyrrhus on the tomb of his father, after the capture of Troy. Niccolini, however, supposes that Polyxena, in the division of the captives, falls to the lot of Pyrrhus, as Cassandra to Agamemnon; that she is beloved by him, and loves him in her turn; but that the Gods have forbidden the return of the Greeks to their own country, until one of the daughters of Priam has

ADALULFO. Parla, mio rè, che vuoi?

ARIOVALDO. Conforto.

ADAL. E a me lo chiedi?

ARIOV. E tu mel dei,

Se a me tu lo rapisti.

ADAL. Accusi forse...?

ARIOV. No, bramo, sfogo, e in un consiglio.

ADAL. Intendo.

Vuoi parlar di Rotrude; a lei sol pensi,

E non vivi che a lei.

ARIOV. Perdona, amico,

Alla mia debolezza; io la comprendo,

E quasi la detesto.

Atto i. Sc. 1.

been sacrificed by the hand of him who is dearest to her, to appease the shade of Achilles. The power of his fanatical feelings, which are well described throughout the whole drama, excites, in the breast of Pyrrhus, the most violent contest between filial piety and love. Polyxena at last dies by his hand, precipitating herself upon the sword with which he was about to strike Calchas. We find in this love-plot, and in the sacrifice, some traces of the French school and the drama of Metastasio; but the purity of the conception, the simplicity of the action, the grandeur of the characters, which are all of the first cast, without confidants or idle attendants, and the power and elevation of the language, springing from the energy of the sentiments, and expressed with precision, are all of them worthy of a scholar of Alfieri. The merits to which this tragedian may lay an exclusive claim, are the lively representation of the time and scene of the drama, the locality of the poetry, if I may so express myself, and the many allusions which it contains to Grecian manners and history. Niccolini, fresh from the perusal of Homer and of Virgil, has preserved more of the customs and opinions of the Greeks, than may perhaps be allowable in the modern drama. He calls up to our imagination and impresses into his service all the poetical traditions which we find in the classics, while he enriches his poem with all the antique magnificence of the

ruins of Troy; for it is within the yet smoking walls of that city that the scene of his tragedy is laid.*

* I shall give a few extracts from this tragedy, which was represented in 1811, and which raised such brilliant expectations of the young author, whose first attempt it was. Calchas describes to Ulysses the apparition of Achilles :

CALCANTE.

Pirro

Coi Mirmidoni suoi sfidava in guerra
E la Grecia, e gli Dei, dove d'Achille
S'erge il sepolcro : *in resta era ogni lancia* (†),
E teso ogni arco, allor che i passi miei
Guida incognita forza : ah! certo un Dio
M'empiea di se, ch'io più mortal non era.
Volo in mezzo alle schiere, affronto Pirro
E grido : Queste alla paterna tomba
Son le vittime care? Ah! sorgi, Achille,
Sorgi, e rimira dell' insano Pirro
Le sacrileghe imprese, ed arrossisci
D'esser gli padre. Allor dai marmi un cupo
Gemito s'ode: nell' incerte destre
Tremano l'aste, le contrarie schiere
Unisce la paura, il suol vacilla,
Il cielo tuona, agli sdegnati flutti
L'ira s'accresce del presente Achille;
Orrendo ei stette sulla tomba: in oro
Gli spléndean l' armi emule al sole, e fiamma
Dell' antico furor gli ardea negli occhi.
Così li volse nel funesto sdegno
Contro il figlio d'Atreo. Tu, prole ingrata,

† This is an error in costume; it was only in the middle ages that the lance was ever put in the rest.

But to return to Alfieri. In the collection of his works, published during his life, of eight vo-

Tu, grida a Pirro, mi contrasti onore
 In vano. Trema, l'ostia io scorgo, il ferro
 A me promesso. Il sacerdote, il sangue
 Sà Polissena.* Allor vermiglia luce
 Dall' armi sfolgorò, maggiore, immenso,
 Torreggiò Achille sulla tomba, ascose
 Fra i lampi il capo, fra le nubi, e sparve.

Polyxena, Atto iv. Sc. 2.

In the same act Cassandra is suddenly seized with the prophetic fervor, and reveals to Agamemnon the terrors of the future.

CASSANDRA.

I Numi

A tua crudel clemenza egual mercede
 Daranno, io tel predico.

AGAM.

E quale?

CAS.

Un figlio

Simile a te; che ardisca, e tremi, e sia
 Empio per la pietà; che non s'appelli
 Innocente, nè reo; che la natura
 Vendichi e offenda;... a che mi rendi, O Febo,
 Inutil dono!... Ilio non cadde?... Ah! dove
 Sono! Che veggo! O patria mia, raffrena
 Il pianto, e mira sull' Euboico lido
 Le fiamme ultrici... Già la Grecia nuota
 Dalle tue spoglie oppressa... Orribil notte
 Siede sul mare... Il fulmine la squarcia...
 Ah! chi lo vibra?... Tardi, O Dea, conosci
 I Greci, tardi a vendicarmi impugnì
 La folgore paterna... Eccomi in Argo:
 Tenebre eguali alle Troiane stanno
 Sovra la reggia Pelopea: di pianto
 Suonan gli atri regali... Imbellezza mano

lumes, five contain his tragedies, which are known to every one; and the other three are filled with his political works and poems, with which very few persons are acquainted. A long

Vendica l'Asia, e la nefanda scûre
Cade pur sul mio collo. Ah! grazie, O Numi,
Alfin libera io sono, e già ritrovo
L'ombre de' miei...Che dissi! Ah! ch'io vaneggio.

In the first scene of the fifth act, Polyxena having determined to die, in order to expiate the love which she is ashamed of feeling for her father's murderer, thus takes leave of her sister Cassandra :

Certo il mio fato,
Non cercarne perchè. Meco sepolto
Resti ciò, che a te duolo, a me vergogna
Saria, se tu il sapessi. A quest' arcano
Dono il mio sangue: nè acquistarne onore,
Ma non perderlo è il frutto. Io non t' inganno :
Son giusti i Numi, e la mia morte è giusta.
La madre assisti; tu le ascolta il pianto,
E in consolar la sventurata, adempi
Pur le mie veci. Esser sostegno, e guida
Agl' infermi anni suoi tu dei, nè troppo
Rammentarmi all' afflitta; il suo dolore
Accresceresti. Sul materno volto
Ai tuoi baci, O Cassandra, aggiungi i miei.
All' ombre io scenderò, ma questa cura
Verrà meco insepolta. A Priamo, ai figli,
Di lei ragionerò. Dirò che teco
Lasciai la madre. Ah! tu mi guardi, e piangi!
Deh! col tuo duol non funestarmi, O cara,
Il piacer della morte.

treatise *On the Prince and on Literature* forms one of these volumes, and may, in point of elegance and force of style, be compared with the best writings in the Italian language. It is rich in thought and high sentiment; and treats, with profound ability and in every view, of that important question, the protection which it is said a prince ought to extend to literature, and the corrupting effects of this patronage upon literary men. The extreme bitterness, however, of the author's manner, and the affected style, which is evidently imitated from Machiavelli, take away all our pleasure in the perusal of this book. We are so well acquainted, before commencing it, with the prejudices of the author, that we sometimes combat opinions to which we might have yielded, had they been less roughly presented to us. Alfieri, like Machiavelli, treats every enquiry as a question of utility and not of morality; but his excessive bitterness has at least this advantage, that it does not conceal the contempt which he feels for those who stand in need of his melancholy counsels, and to whom they are addressed.

The next volume contains another long dissertation *On Tyranny*, in which the same faults are observable, with even a greater exaggeration of principle, and with reasoning more palpably false. His panegyric on Trajan, which he supposes to have been written by Pliny, is a very favourable specimen of Alfieri's powers of eloquence, if,

indeed, true eloquence can exist, when the author writes under an assumed character, and imagines himself the creature of another age, under the influence of other manners, and of other circumstances.

Alfieri also attempted to write an epic in four cantos, in the *ottava rima*, entitled *Etruria Vendicata*. The hero is Lorenzino de' Medici, and the catastrophe is the murder of the contemptible Alexander, first duke of Florence. A conspiracy like this is perhaps little fitted to be the subject of an epic poem, in which we rather look for truth and nature, and an acquaintance with the human heart, than for the rich colourings of the imagination. In this poem, although the plot is in itself full of interest, it is yet rendered cold and flat by the ornaments with which the poet has surrounded it. All the supernatural part, the appearance of Liberty, of Fear, and of the shade of Savonarola, produces no other impression than a cold allegory would do. The poet does not appear to feel the truth of his verse any more than his readers. The liberties, also, which are taken with historical facts in the arrangement of the incidents, in the character of Lorenzino, and in the death of Alexander, appear to me to injure, instead of augmenting the effect; and to conclude, the style is absolutely destitute of dignity and of poetical attraction. It is not, however, reasonable to judge Alfieri by a work which he

never avowed, and which, in all probability, he regarded as unfinished at the time when it was published without his consent.

Five odes on the independence of America, nearly two hundred sonnets, and some other poems in various styles, complete the collection of Alfieri's works, as they were published in his life time. His posthumous productions, which began to make their appearance in 1804, and which extend to thirteen volumes in octavo, have occupied the attention of Italy, and indeed of all the literati of Europe, without adding much to the author's reputation. His *Abel*, which he whimsically entitled a *Tramelogedy*, is a composition in which he has attempted to blend together the lyric and the tragic style of poetry, and to unite the melody of the opera with the most powerful workings of the feelings. The allegory, however, is fatiguing upon the stage, and the versification of Alfieri does not possess the loftiness and the fascination which are requisite to adapt it to music. The whole drama is cold and uninteresting. Two tragedies on the story of Alcestes follow: one is from Euripides, and is merely a happy translation; the other, which is on the same subject, the poet has recast and treated in his own manner. For ten years Alfieri abstained from writing for the stage. In that interval not only his ideas, but his character itself, sustained a change; he had been softened down by the

domestic affections ; and his *Alcestes* does not resemble any of his former tragedies. Conjugal tenderness is beautifully painted in it ; and the intervention of supernatural powers and of the chorus, together with a happy termination, give it quite a different character. Yet the seal of genius is most strongly impressed upon his earlier tragedies.

The comedies of Alfieri, of which there are six, are contained in two volumes ; and in all probability they will never be played upon any stage. It is difficult to conceive how this celebrated man could ever have entertained the whimsical idea of making a comedy a vehicle for his political sentiments. The four first, which are in fact only one drama divided into four parts, are written to illustrate the monarchical, the aristocratical, the democratical, and the mixed form of government. He has entitled them, *One, Few, Too many*, and *The Antidote*. They are all in iambics, like his tragedies. The scene of the first is laid in Persia, and the subject of it is the election of Darius to the throne by the neighing of his horse. The drama turns upon the fraud of Darius's groom, who, by an artifice, makes his master's steed neigh before any of the others ; and the king's ingratitude in sacrificing his horse to the sun, and then raising a statue to him, forms the catastrophe. The scene of the second, the drama of aristocracy, is laid at Rome, in the house of the

Gracchi; the subject of it is the contest between the latter and Fabius, for the consulate. Their defeat, and humiliation, induces them to propose an Agrarian law. The scene of the third drama, *Democracy*, or *Too many*, is laid at the court of Alexander, and the orators are introduced who have been despatched to the king by the Athenians. These orators are ten in number, and are divided into two parties, of which Demosthenes and Æschines are the leaders; and they are in turns courted and mocked by Alexander and his courtiers. Their baseness, their jealousy, and their venality are fully displayed in the drama, which, however, can scarcely be said to boast of any action. The drama of *Mixed Government*, or, as it is also singularly entitled, *Mix three Poisons and you will have the Antidote*, is a plot of his own invention, and the scene is laid in one of the Orcades. It was, to a certain extent, a new idea to choose heroic characters to fill the parts in a comedy. In the present age, a taste has arisen for the comedy of common life; and Alfieri has expressed his dislike to this manner of debasing the dramatic art, and of associating poetry with the most vulgar sentiments and circumstances. It is strange, however, that he should himself have felt no disgust at attributing vulgarity of manner, of feeling, and of language, to men whose very names, rendered so familiar to us by history, lead us to expect some-

thing elevated and noble from them. He seems to have thought it necessary to introduce into his comedies the most distinguished men, merely to display their low and vulgar qualities. He has endued them with all the passions which their rank should have engaged them most anxiously to conceal; he has attributed to them language which they would have blushed to hear; and he expects to excite laughter by exposing the poverty and often the grossness of great men's wit. Very little praise is due to a writer who entertains us at an expense like this, but Alfieri has not even so far succeeded. To make vice ridiculous, it is not necessary to excite repugnance; but Alfieri, in his comedies, produces in the reader a deep disgust for the society into which he is introduced, and a humiliating sense of the depravity of the human race, which even in the highest ranks can be thus debased. Of the two remaining comedies of Alfieri, the one entitled *La Finestrina* is very fantastical: the scene is laid in Hell, and the comedy, in fact, consists of the dialogues of the dead dramatised. The other is entitled *The Divorce*; not because a divorce is the subject of the piece, but because the author concludes by laying down a maxim that a marriage in Italy puts the parties upon precisely the same footing as a divorce elsewhere. This is the only one of his dramas which can fairly be classed with modern comedies. The characters in it are finely

drawn, and it contains a true, but very severe, representation of Italian manners. All the personages are more or less vicious, and there is therefore very little gaiety in the piece; for it is impossible to laugh at any thing which powerfully excites our indignation. The author manifests in these dramas the powers of a great satirist, not of a successful dramatist.

The satires, which entirely fill the third volume of Alfieri's posthumous works, have had greater success in Italy than all his other compositions, notwithstanding their occasional obscurity, the ruggedness of the verse, and their prosaic style. Alfieri had something of the cynic in his character, which affects his language, when he is not elevated by the dignity of the sock. The rest of his posthumous works consist of translations from the ancient authors, the productions of his latter years, after he had renounced dramatic composition, and when the want of occupation, which he never felt until an advanced age, had induced him to study Greek.

The two last volumes contain the life of Alfieri, written by himself, with that warmth, vivacity, and truth of feeling, which throw such a charm over confessions like these, and which never fail to interest the reader, although the author, honestly displaying his faults, sometimes appears in no very amiable light. If the study of the human

heart, even where the individual has no claim to a rank above mediocrity, is so attractive, how much more precious must those confessions be which present us with portraits of men distinguished by their talents, who have, from time to time, influenced the opinions or the characters of their contemporaries; who have struck out new paths, led the way to new glories, and created new schools of poetry; and who, having impressed their character upon the age in which they lived, are cited by posterity as having constituted the glory of their times! The study of the human mind becomes still more interesting, when the individual is no less remarkable for his intellectual qualities than for his personal character; and when he possesses that inexhaustible fountain of genius which tinctures every thing which it touches with its own colours. It is in his *Memoirs* alone that we can become acquainted with Alfieri*. Extracts from them can

* Alfieri was descended from a rich and noble family, was born at Asti, in Piedmont, on the seventeenth of January, 1749, and died at Florence on the eighth of October, 1803. His first tragedy, *Cleopatra*, which he afterwards regarded as unworthy of being published, was acted for the first time at Turin, on the sixteenth of June, 1775. In the seven following years he composed the fourteen tragedies, which form the first part of his works. After having renounced dramatic composition, he began, at the age of forty-eight, to learn Greek, and made himself completely master of that difficult language. His connexion for more than twenty

give no adequate idea of that boiling impatience of character, which perpetually propelled him towards some indefinite object; of that melancholy agitation of spirit which affected him in every relation of society, in every situation of life, and in every country; of that imperious want, which he ever felt in his soul, for something more free in politics, more elevated in character, more devoted in love, more perfect in friendship; of that ardour for another existence, for another universe, which he vainly sought, with all the rapidity of a courier, from one extremity of Europe to another, and which he was unable to discover in the real world; and of his thirst for that poetical creation which he experienced before he knew it, and which he was unable to satisfy, until casting off the passions of his youth, his thoughts turned to the contemplation of that new universe which he had created in his own bosom, and the agitation of his soul was calmed by the production of those masterpieces which have immortalized his name.

years with a lady, not less distinguished by her character and wit than by her rank, proves that he united many amiable qualities to those faults which he has with so much candour displayed.

CHAPTER XXII.

On the Prose Writers and Epic and Lyric Poets of Italy, during the Eighteenth Century.

ALTHOUGH we have devoted the five last Chapters to the Italian poets of the eighteenth century, we have not yet proceeded farther than the dramatic writers. Metastasio, Goldoni, Gozzi, and Alfieri, almost at the same time, carried the opera, comedy, farce, and tragedy, to the highest pitch which those compositions ever reached in Italy. Those authors have, therefore, justly assumed their rank amongst the classics of which their country is proud, while their reputation has extended itself beyond the limits of their native land, and has become the glory of the age.

There were, however, other Italians who, at this period, devoted themselves to other branches of literature; and who, without being able to take the place of the great men of the sixteenth century, yet proved that the ancient genius of the nation was not absolutely extinct. The individual who approached most nearly to the spirit of earlier times, and who almost appeared to belong to another

age and another state of things, was Niccolo Forteguerra, the author of *Ricciardetto*, the last of the poems of chivalry. With this author terminated that long series of poetical romances, founded on the adventures of Charlemagne's peers, which extended from the twelfth to the eighteenth century. Niccolo Fortinguerra, or Forteguerra, was born at Rome, in 1674, of a family originally from Pistoia ; he was educated to the priesthood, and was made a prelate by the Roman Court. This was one of the reasons which induced him not to publish his poem under his own name, assuming that of *Cartermacho*, which is a translation of it into Greek. He displayed at an early period his talents for verse ; but he had little idea of ever becoming an author, and it was a sort of challenge which gave birth to his poem. He happened to be residing in the country with some persons who were enthusiastic admirers of Ariosto, and who, discovering some hidden meaning in every freak of the poet's imagination, fell into ecstasies at the richness of invention displayed in the *Orlando Furioso*, and at the time and labour which so highly wrought a plot must have cost the poet. Forteguerra, on the contrary, in Ariosto's grace found a proof of his facility in composition. He maintained that all his brilliant creations were the sport, not the labour, of his poetical imagination, and declared that however much he admired them, he could not think them inimitable. The discussion, at

last, became so animated, that Forteguerra engaged to write, in four and twenty hours, a canto of a poem in the same style, which he promised to read to his friends on the evening of the ensuing day. It was not the poetical charms of Ariosto that he undertook to equal. He only wished to prove that this species of composition was far from being difficult, and that by the assistance of the supernatural and the romantic, related in a lively manner, it was very possible to captivate the reader without wasting much labour. The first canto of Ricciardetto was composed under these circumstances, and surpassed the expectation both of the friends of Forteguerra and of the author himself. They begged him to continue it, and this romance was all written with the same facility, and in an extraordinary short space of time. More deliberate corrections no doubt were necessary to prepare it for the public eye.

Ricciardetto is therefore the product, in some degree, of the pleasing talents of an improvvisatore, the creature of that fertile imagination, that natural harmony, and that simple and infantine gaiety which characterize the Italians. The stanzas display a negligence which only the beauty of so poetical and sonorous a language could ever have rendered agreeable; but they often possess the superior merit which results from the ardour of inspiration. The versification is frequently careless and heavy, but occasionally

it displays all the brilliant colours of a southern imagination. A few portions of the romance are of the highest order of poetry, while in others the habitual liveliness and freedom give an air of charming simplicity to the easy style in which they are written. The principal hero is a younger brother of Rinaldo, but all the Paladins of Charlemagne are introduced in their proper characters. The comic part of the romance is displayed in broader relief than in Ariosto. The manner of that great poet appears to have been blended by Forteguerra with that of Berni and Tassoni; and, indeed, he equals all his predecessors in wit and pleasantry. A slight tincture of profanity occasionally adds to the piquancy of the poem; for the prelate thought he might make free with his own property. The hypocrisy and sensual passions of the monks, in general, and of Ferrau, who had become a hermit, in particular, are the objects of this very diverting satire of Forteguerra.* He died on the seventeenth of February, 1735.

* The first appearance of Ferrau, and his dispute with Rinaldo about Angelica, place his brutality and his devotion in curious opposition :

Dì pur fratello mio, ch' io ti perdono :
 E presa Ferraù la disciplina
 Batteasi forte sì, che parve un tuono.
 Disse Rinaldo : Sino a domattina
 Per me, seguita pur cotesto suono :
 Ma quella fune è troppo piccolina ;

There existed some celebrated prose writers in the eighteenth century, though their works are seldom found in libraries, and excite but little curiosity. The long thralldom to which the intellect of the Italians had been subjected, prevented them

S' io fossi in tè, O Ferraù beato,
Mi frusterei con un bel correggiato.

Io ti vorrei corregger con modestia
Sc si potesse, (disse Ferraù) ;
Ma tu sei troppo la solenne bestia,
E a dirla giusta, non ne posso più.
Disse Rinaldo: Disprezzo e molestia
Sofferta in pace è grata al buon Gesù ;
Ma tu sei, per la vergine Maria,
Romito falso, e più briccon di pria.

A quel dir Ferraù gli diè sul grugno
La disciplina sua cinque o sei volte :
E Rinaldo affibiogli un cotal pugno,
Che gli fè dar dugento giravolte.

Ma nel mentre che ognuno urla e schiamazza
S'ode un gran picchio all'uscio della cella,
Che introna a' combattenti la cervella.

E grida Ferraute: Ave Maria ;
E mena intanto un pugno al buon Rinaldo :
Gridano: Aprite, quelli della via.
Nìun si muove, ed in pugnar stà saldo.
Pur Ferraù dall'oste si disvia
E sbuffando, per l'ira e per lo caldo,
Si affaccia al bucolino della chiave,
Poi spranga l'uscio con pesante trave.

from raising themselves to the same rank as other nations, whenever reason or philosophy was the object of their labours. Even after they had partially recovered that liberty of which they had been so long deprived, they were compelled to tread in the footsteps of the foreign philosophers who had preceded them. In the works of their most ingenious and profound writers, we find them frequently stopping to discuss commonplace truths, or trite sophistries, of which all the rest of Europe had long been tired; but which they, with perfect good faith, brought forward as ingenious, deep, and novel ideas of their own. It is, besides, exceedingly difficult for those who can only devote themselves to philosophy by incurring a sort of rebellion, to examine any system with impartiality. Their intellect is either acted upon throughout life by the prejudices in which they have been educated, or else they reject them with such violence, that they look with a hostile feeling upon those questions from the consideration of which they had been excluded; and attack with bitterness the most consolatory truths, because they have been inculcated by those whom they despise. The little importance of the prose writers of Italy prevented us from dwelling upon them, in giving an account of the literature of the seventeenth century; and we shall therefore take this opportunity of presenting a view of what has been accomplished in

that department of letters, from the sixteenth century to our own times.

In History alone have the Italians any claim to merit, at a period when every other kind of inspiration seemed to have forsaken them. We shall always read with pleasure the works of Fra Paolo Sarpi, the Venetian, who lived between 1552 and 1623, and who defended with great courage the authority of the sovereign and the senate of Venice against the power of the Popes, notwithstanding their excommunications and their attempts at assassination. His History of the Council of Trent, which was published under the assumed name of Pietro Soave, contains a curious account of the intrigues of the Court of Rome at the period of the Reformation. The History of the Civil Wars of France, by Enrico Caterino Davila, the son of a Cypriote, and born in 1576, is a work of still greater interest. He very early connected himself with the Court of France, and Catherine de' Medici was his godmother. In his gratitude for this kindness he has sometimes suppressed in his history, the relation of many crimes in which she was involved, and of which the other historians of France have endeavoured to shew that she alone was guilty. After the death of Henry III. and the capitulation of Paris, Davila served for five years under the banners of Henry IV. In 1599 he was recalled to his family at Venice, and there, occupied at the same time

with his civil and military duties, he composed his History, which comprehends the civil wars from 1559 to 1598, and displays a profound knowledge of the times, the characters, and the intrigues, upon which, however, he has perhaps been a little too diffuse. He was assassinated in 1631, during a journey, on account of some insignificant quarrel. With less talent, less nature, less thought, and less depth, Guido Bentivoglio has yet acquired considerable reputation by his History of the Wars of Flanders, and by the Account of his Embassies. He was despatched in 1607 as Apostolic Nuncio to Flanders, where he remained in that character until 1616. The four following years he spent in France; and procured a cardinal's hat on the eleventh of January, 1621. Too great a pretension to elegance of style, a declared partiality for the Spaniards, an interested zeal for the Roman court, and a superficial understanding, derogate considerably from the value of his History; though the precision and clearness of his style entitle him to a higher rank than many of his countrymen. Battista Nani, the historian of Venice for a period included between the years 1613 and 1673, is the last of the writers of this age, who, by his narrative talents and his merits as a prose writer, has obtained some degree of reputation.

The Italian authors who in the eighteenth century have been celebrated for their prose

writings, are rather philosophers than poets. Amongst these may be mentioned Francesco Algarotti, of Venice, (1712—1764,) the friend of Frederic II. and of Voltaire, in whom we find a rare and happy union of scientific knowledge, taste, philosophy, erudition, and benevolence. His works have been collected in seventeen volumes, 8vo. Venice, 1791—1794. Xavier Bettinelli, of Mantua, (1718—1808,) a jesuit and professor, whose numerous writings are comprised in twenty-four volumes, in 12mo., should likewise be noticed. The fine arts, philosophy, and polite literature, fill the greater portion of these volumes. The letters of Virgil to the Arcadians, in which the author attacks, with considerable wit, but with great injustice, the reputation of Dante and Petrarch, soon brought him into notice, but gained him a crowd of enemies. Algarotti and Bettinelli are of that class of men of taste who follow the spirit of the age, instead of leading it into new paths, and whose reputation, by soaring too high in their own day, rarely survives them.

About the same period flourished the celebrated Marquis Beccaria, who, in his *Treatise on Crimes and Punishments*, has defended with such animation the cause of humanity; and the Cavaliere Filangieri, the author of a valuable work on *Legislation*. Neither of these productions properly belong to literature as we are considering

it, which may likewise be said of the Revolutions of Italy and Germany, by the Abbate Denina. The style of these works is but a small portion of their merit, and a translation of them would fully supply the place of the originals. From what has been said, it may be gathered that there are no prose writers amongst the Italians of the eighteenth century, whose compositions can induce a desire, in those who are ignorant of it, to become acquainted with the Italian language.

We have now treated of Italian literature from its first origin, when the language was in its infancy, down to our own days; and we have taken a view of the writers of every kind, and of every age. To complete this portion of our work, it only remains to say a few words respecting the poets of Italy contemporary with ourselves, the commencement of whose fame we have ourselves seen, and upon whom the judgment of the public, anticipating that of posterity, has not been passed without a possibility of appeal. The account which we are about to give of these writers is a matter of some delicacy. Their present reputation is confounded with their real fame. They all stand pretty nearly upon the same level; nor does it become us to decide upon pretensions upon which the public voice has not yet pronounced a determinate judgment. We shall therefore consider ourselves bound to bestow an almost equal degree of attention upon all those who possess any degree of celebrity.

The present race of literary men in Italy attempt to supply, by a greater depth of thought, the deficiencies of the imagination, as may be observed on a comparison with the poets of the *sixteenth century*. The study of philosophy has replaced that of the classics; the intellect has, momentarily at least, shaken off its chains; new ideas have been spread abroad, and the knowledge of foreign languages and letters has gone far to dissipate the prejudices of the Italians; who, instead of being, as they were formerly, an isolated people, have now become members of the great literary Republic of Europe.

The first amongst these modern poets, with reference both to the period at which he flourished, and to the extent of his talents, is Melchior Cesarotti, whom Italy lost a few years since, at an advanced age. He was one of the most learned men of his country, and, having an excellent knowledge of the *classical languages*, he translated Homer with no less of the spirit of a critic than of a poet. But the admirers of antiquity will never pardon him for having, by various alterations, attempted to render the works of the father of poetry more conformable to the taste of the times; for having dared to adapt Homer to a standard of taste and sentiment, which will, in all probability, soon be abolished, while the beauties of the great original will never pass away. It is the admirable monument so prized

by every successive age which we require a translator to present to us, not the new Iliad of Pope or of Cesarotti.*

* As an example of the versification of Cesarotti, and to enable the reader to perceive in what manner he has preserved or altered the original, we have given below the celebrated scene between Priam and Achilles, where the former demands the body of his son. (Iliad xxiv. v. 486 to 606. Trans. 657 to 689.)

Ecco è in vista d'Achille: a quella vista
 Un tumulto d'affetti, un gruppo, un nembo,
 L'anima gli rimescola, ne scoppiano
 Mal repressi singulti; ognun si volge,
 Scosso l'Eroe fiso sel guarda, il vecchio
 Pria che 'l ravvisi, a piè gli casca, e man
 A lui strette e ginocchia, ah pietà, grida.
 Divino Achille, il padre tuo t'implora;
 Per tuo padre pietà. Mirati innanzi
 Un immagine sua: canuto e carco
 D'anni e di cure in sua solinga reggia,
 E cinto forse di perigli anch'esso,
 Langue e sospira, e chiama il figlio; ah'l figlio
 Ei rivedrà, fra le sue braccia un giorno
 Cadrà per gioia; O me tapino ed orbo,
 Diserto me! tutto perdei; più speme,
 Più conforto non ho: di tanta prole
 (Cinquanta del mio talamo fecondo
 Erano i frutti) omai già pochi, (Achille,
 Troppo tel sai) restano in vita: io vidi
 L'un dopo l'altro, di sanguigne morti
 Contaminar gli occhi paterni; e quello
 Ch'era il primo e 'l miglior, quel che fu solo
 Mio sostegno e mia speme (oimè, non farlo
 Pur non ardisco) per tua man mel tolse

The latter poet, perhaps, deserves more fame for his translation of Ossian. He appears to have been deeply penetrated with the spirit of the ancient Caledonian, and has preserved much of his dim and gigantic grandeur. With a very harmonious ear, he has always chosen the most proper metre to express the lyrical inspiration of the bard of Morven. These odes, which display a greater variety in the disposition of the rhymes than is to be found in the works of any other of the Italian poets, appear rather to be the offspring of native inspiration than translations. There is a great deal of genius displayed in the form which he has given to these compositions, as well as much truth and precision in the fidelity with which he has rendered the original; and as there are none who are able to read the songs of

Il fato inesorabile. Ti basti,
 Placati alfin, terribil Dio; tremante
 A te ricorro e lagrimoso; ah rendi
 Gli avanzi a me della straziata salma
 Ch' Ettore già fù. Quelle in compenso accogli
 Ch' io recai meco, preziose offerte
 Che a te consacro; dell' età cadente
 Rispetta i dritti; ti disarmi il sacro
 Carattere paterno; e se pur vago
 Sei dello strazio mio, pensa che immenso
 Lo soffro già, non mai provato in terra
 Dal cor d'un padre, poichè adoro e bacio
 La fatal destra, quella destra, oh Dio!
 Che ancor del sangue de' miei figli è tinta.

the son of Fingal in their primitive language, I should recommend the perusal of the translation of Cesarotti in preference to the prose of Macpherson; since in the former we have all the charm and harmony of verse, without which, poetry must always appear monotonous and affected.

Cesarotti is very voluminous, both in his translations and in his original compositions. The last edition of his works consists of thirty volumes. The modern Italians are too much addicted to prolixity, and we lose all desire to become intimately acquainted with such interminable writers.

Lorenzo Pignotti of Arezzo, who died at Pisa, in which University he was one of the professors, has acquired considerable celebrity by his fables, which are thought to surpass his other poems, though many of the latter are highly beautiful. The Italian language appears to be peculiarly adapted to this species of composition. It has preserved a sort of infantine simplicity, absolutely necessary to a relater of fables, who demands to be believed when, like a child, he attributes to inanimate objects, or to creatures deprived of reason, human passions, sentiments, and language. Pignotti relates these fables with infinite grace; his style is perfectly picturesque; and he always presents an image to the eye of his readers. In his versification he is very harmo

nious ; sometimes writing with great latitude, and at others confining himself within the most severe rules, yet always preserving an air of playfulness, as though he did not feel the fetters with which he had shackled himself. Facility is essential to grace and simplicity, nor does it ever abandon him. Sometimes, however, Pignotti is too diffuse, and from a fear of confining himself within too narrow limits, he trespasses upon the patience of his readers. The most celebrated writers of fables have, we know, frequently done nothing more than translate from another language fables which seem to be as ancient as the world itself. In this way Pignotti has followed La Fontaine, Phædrus, Esop, and Pilpai. A few, indeed, are of his own invention, but they are not in general his best. The moral of a fable should rather be addressed to man as a member of a social community, than as one of the fashionable world. The passions, the vices, and the errors of the human race form admirable caricatures when represented in animals ; but the follies of fashionable society have not enough of nature in them to suit the same purpose. Pignotti, however, appears to have addressed his fables to fops and coquettes. The resemblance between the persons intended to be satirized and the creatures introduced in the fables, exists rather in the writer's wit and imagination than in the objects

which are thus compared, and these little poems consequently want truth*. When he versifies an

* The fables of Pignotti are all too long to allow me to extract any at full length. I shall only give the commencement of the eleventh, *Il Ragno*, which will convey some idea of the ease of the poet's versification, and of his talent at painting.

Vedi, O leggiadra Fillide,
 Quel fraudolento insetto
 Che ascoso stà nell' angolo
 Del obbliato tetto ?

E che nel foro piccolo
 Mezzo si mostra e cela,
 Attento ai moti tremuli
 Della sua fragil tela ?

Ci narrano le favole
 Che bestia si schifosa
 Fù già donzella amabile
 E al par di te vezzosa.

E anch' essa dilettavasi
 Come tu appunto fai,
 I più brillanti giovani
 Ferir co' suoi bei rai.

Ora uno sguardo tenero,
 Ma insiem falso e bugiardo,
 Con un linguaggio tacito
 Parea dicesse, io ardo ;

E di pietà la languida
 Faccia sì ben pingea
 Che i cuori anche i più timidi
 Assicurar pareva, &c.

But this fable, containing about one hundred verses, is too long for the mere purpose of drawing a comparison between the coquette and the spider, and between her admirers and flies.

old subject Pignotti soon falls into the contrary error. The writer of fables is always liable to one of two faults ; too great study, or too much trifling. If he is desirous of instilling wit into his verses, he is apt to forget what kind of compositions he is engaged upon, and becomes affected ; and if, on the contrary, he neglects ingenious and brilliant ideas, he easily falls into common-places. The beasts who are introduced are allowed to possess neither as much wit as men, nor less. The French writers of fables who have succeeded La Fontaine, have erred by an excess of wit ; the Italian authors, by an excess of simplicity.

Pignotti did not confine himself to the composition of fables only, for he has left some odes and a poem, in blank verse, entitled *The Shade of Pope*. Pignotti was well acquainted with English literature, but the turn of his mind, and the peculiarity of his talents, did not fit him to take full advantage of that circumstance. He was of the classic, not the romantic, order of poets. Correctness pleased him more than genius ; and Pope, whom he has celebrated in his verses, appeared to him the first of English poets.

The poems of Luigi Savioli, of Bologna, are entirely amatory ; and none of the poets of the present age so completely remind the reader of Anacreon. There is the same grace in the images, the same softness in the versification, the same expression of fond and happy love,

without any mixture of deep and passionate feeling. Like Anacreon, we may imagine this poet seated at the festive table, and crowned with roses at his mistress's side. He seems not to have been made to experience the torments of jealousy, or the impetuosity of anger, or, indeed, suffering under any of its forms. The metre which he has selected he never changes. It is a stanza of four short verses, of which the first and the third are *sdrucchioli* of eight syllables, and do not rhyme together ; the second and the fourth are lines of seven syllables, and rhyme together. The effect of these little verses is singularly musical and agreeable to the ear, producing something of the same feeling of delight to which the poet abandons himself.

Savioli might be called a Pagan poet, for he never steps out of the heathen mythology, which, in his creed, seems to form part of the worship of love. This is so completely in harmony with the habitual feelings of the poet, and has become so natural to him, that we judge him as we should judge a classical author; and we feel no dislike to what, in his case, is a species of worship, while, in other poets, it is merely an allegory. His poetry is highly picturesque ; each separate couplet makes a beautiful little painting, which we gaze at with delight as it passes, though it vanishes almost as soon as it is formed. It is quite impossible to give any idea in a prose translation of the graces of a poet, whose charm

consists entirely in his style. To give them in verse is, it must be admitted, a difficult task, though a very useful one, to those who wish to excel in the poetical art. The odes to Venus,* to Destiny, and to Happiness, will give some notion

* O Figlia alma d'Egioco,
Leggiadro onor dell' acque,
Per cui le grazie apparvero,
E 'l riso al mondo nacque.

O molle Dea, di ruvido
Fabbro, gelosa cura,
O del figliuol di Cinira
Beata un di ventura.

Teco il garzon cui temono
Per la gran face eterna,
Ubbidienza e imperio
Soavemente alterna.

Accesse a te le tenere
Fanciulle alzan la mano,
Sol te ritrosa invocano
Le antiche madri invano.

Te sulle corde Eolie
Saffo invitar solea,
• Quando a quiete i languidi
Begli occhi amor togliea.

E tu richiesta, O Venere,
Sovente a lei scendesti,
Posta in obbligo l' ambrosia
E i tetti aurei celesti.

Il gentil carro Idalio
Ch'or le colombe addoppia,
Lieve traea di passera
Nera amorosa coppia.

of Savioli's rich poetical style, and of those animated paintings contained in his lyrics, which are too seldom found in the French language.

Giovanni Gherardo di Rossi, a Roman by birth, of whom we have, in one of the preceding chapters, already spoken as a comic poet, resembles Savioli, in many respects, in his amatory poems. Like him, his imagination revels in the classical mythology; his style, like his, is graceful; and the pictures which his poems present are all Anacreontic. He has given the name of *Pictu-*

E mentre udir propizia
Solevi il flebil canto,
Tergean le dita rosee
Della fanciulla il pianto.

E a noi pur anco insolito
Ricerca il petto ardore,
E a noi l'esperta cetera
Dolce risuona amore.

Se tu m'assisti, io Pallade
Abbia se vuol nimica :
Teco ella innanzi a Paride
Perdò la lite antica.

A che valer può l'Egida
Se 'l figlio tuo percote?
Quel che i suoi dardi possono
L'asta immortal non puote.

Meco i mortali innalzino
Solo al tuo nome altari;
Citera tua divengano
Il ciel, la terra, i mari.

resque and Poetical Trifles to some pleasing epigrams, which are illustrated by still more pleasing engravings. Perhaps, however, he has relied too much on the graver of the artist; and the epigrams, indeed, would not be of much value without the explanation of the prints. Rossi has more wit, but less tenderness, in his love songs than Savioli, and therefore less nature. We perceive the poet's hand rather than his heart. In his fables, of which Rossi has published a volume, we find similar faults; there is more wit and less simplicity in them than in those of Pignotti. Rossi had the talent, but not the inspiration, of a poet. What he wished to be, he was; and since his path was entirely of his own choice, he might, perhaps, with advantage have attempted a higher style of poetry, in which wit is more valuable, and in which natural grace and the forgetfulness of the poet's self are less essentially requisite.

After Savioli and Gherardo di Rossi, may be ranked Gio. Fantoni, a Tuscan, better known by the name of Labindo, an appellation which he received as an Arcadian. In his amatory poems we find much ease, grace, and voluptuousness. In his odes, he has attempted to imitate the different metres which Horace has employed, at least as far as the language permitted him, and he has likewise endeavoured to preserve his style of thinking, and the turn of his wit; but it was, per-

haps, the consciousness of this imitation which deprived Fantoni of that freedom of style so essential to a lyrical poet. Labindo, who attached himself to the court of Charles Emmanuel Malespina, Marquis of Fosdinovo, did not forget the interests and the destinies of Europe, in the beautiful mountains of Lunigiana, where the sovereign rules over a country of two or three square miles, and a population of a few hundred inhabitants. Of all the Italian poets of this period, he is the one in whose works we find the most frequent allusions to public events. He speaks with enthusiasm of the victories of the English during the American war, and of the exploits of Admiral Rodney. As the period approached when his own country was, at length, to experience the horrors of war, of which she had so long been an indifferent spectator, Labindo immediately perceived how disgraceful a timid line of conduct would be to him, and in his Ode to Italy, in 1791, we discover the truest patriotism; patriotism, which taught his countrymen to seek for independence and glory in the reformation of their manners and in their own energies and virtues.*

* Or druda, or serva di straniera genti,
Raccorcio il crin, breve la gonna, il femore
Sulle piume adagiato, i di languenti
Passi oziosa, e di tua gloria immemore.

The Cavaliere Ippolito Pindemonti, of Verona, is the first of the Italians whose poetry is thoughtful and melancholy. The loss of a friend, and an illness, which attacked himself, and which he considered fatal, made a deep impression upon his mind of the vanity of life. Detaching itself from the contemplation of its own feelings, his heart turned with eagerness to the pleasures of nature, and to the delights of the country and of solitude. In his little poem on the four portions of the day he muses on his own tomb, a humble stone, unmarked by any inscription.

Oh, then, thus softly to the silent bed
 Of the dark tomb let me at length descend ;
 Where the bleak path which now on earth I tread,
 So dear and yet so sad, shall have an end.
 Day shall return ; but this unconscious head
 Shall never from its pillow damp ascend,
 Nor on the fields and all their tenants gaze,
 Nor watch the setting sun's sweet parting rays.

Alle mense, alle danze, i figli tuoi
 Ti seguon sconsigliati, e il nostro orgoglio
 Più non osa vantar Duci ed Eroi,
 Che i spiranti nel marmo in Campidoglio.

Squarcia le vesti dell' obbrobrio ; al crine
 L' elmo riponi, al sen l' usbergo ; destati
 Dal lungo sonno, sulle vette alpine
 Alla difesa ed ai trionfi apprestati.
 Se il mar, se l' onda che ti parte, e serra
 Vano fia schermo a un vincitor terribile,
 Serba la tomba nell' Esperia terra
 All' audace stranier fato invincibile.

Perchance, across these pleasant hills, one day,
 In search of me some much-loved friend will come,
 And asking for me, as he takes his way,
 Some peasant-boy will lead him to my tomb;
 My tomb—this nameless stone—where oft I stray,
 And rest my weary limbs as 'twere my home,
 And sit unmoved and sad, or to the breeze
 Pour all my soul's poetic ecstasies.

And these dark groves, which o'er me gently sigh,
 In death above my peaceful grave shall nod,
 And the tall grass, so welcome to my eye,
 Over my head shall deck the verdant sod.
 "O happy thou!" my friend perchance shall cry,
 "The calm and lonely path which thou hast trod
 Hath led thy footsteps to a holier state,
 And half deceived the stern decrees of Fate."*

* O così dolcemente della fossa
 Nel tacito calar sen tenebroso
 E a poco a poco ir terminand' io possa
 Questo viaggio uman caro e affannoso ;
 Ma il dì ch' or parte, riederà ; quest' ossa
 Io più non alzerò dal lor riposo ;
 Nè il prato, e la gentil sua varia prole
 Rivedrò più, nè il dolce addio del sole.

Forse per questi ameni colli un giorno
 Volgerà qualche amico spirto il passo,
 E chiedendo di me, del mio soggiorno
 Sol gli fia mostro senza nome un sasso
 Sotto quell' elce, a cui sovente or torno
 Per dar ristoro al fianco errante e lasso,
 Or pensoso ed immobile qual pietra,
 Ed or voci Febée vibrando all' etra.

Mi coprirà quella stess' ombra morto,
 L' ombra, mentr' io vivea, sì dolce avuta,

Several other of Pindemonti's poems are, like the foregoing, something in the style of Gray. It is singular to hear the Genius of the North thus using Italian accents, and it is difficult to imagine a thoughtful spirit breathing forth its feelings amidst all the gaieties which nature displays in Italy. We become attached to Pindemonti, for all his sentiments are noble and pure. This delicacy of feeling may be observed in his love-verses to an English lady; in his lines to a mother who had resolved to nurse her own children; in those on liberty; and in his address to Frederic IV. of Denmark, supposed to be written by a lady of Lucca, who was beloved by the prince during his residence in Italy, and who, after his departure, shut herself up in a convent, being unable to conquer her passion. Others of Pindemonti's compositions are of a still more foreign interest. He had travelled much, and we have odes of his on the Lake of Geneva, the glaciers of Bossons and the cascade of Arpinas; names which we are more astonished to find in the mouth of an Italian; than in that of an American.

It has been said that Pindemonti was a tra-

E l' erba, de' miei lumi ora conforto,
Allor sul capo mi sarà cresciuta.
Felice tè, dirà forse ei, che scorto
Per una strada è ver solinga e muta,
Ma d' onde in altro suol meglio si varca, .
Giungesti quasi ad ingannar la Parca.

La Sera, st. 12, p. 73.

veller, nor indeed did he travel without benefit; and yet he has written a little poem, full of ingenuity and wit against the prevailing passion for travelling. With a knowledge of foreign lands, he has yet preserved an affection for his own country, which is always the mark of a noble mind. The following verses are most pleasing :

* Oh! happy he, whose foot hath never stray'd
O'er the sweet threshold of his native land;
Whose heart hath never been enthrall'd to those
He ne'er again must see; whose spirit mourns not
For those that live, though ever dead to him.

A little further on he thus proceeds :

† And if the importunate
Stern hand of death should seek thee, dost not fear
That it should find thee in the wretched chamber
Of some poor hostel, far from all thy friends,
Mid unaccustom'd faces, in the arms
Of thine hired servant, who, though erewhile faithful,
Corrupted by temptations on thy travels,
Now casts a greedy eye upon thy mails,

* Oh felice chi mai non pose il piede
Fuori della natia sua dolce terra;
Egli il cor non lasciò fitto in oggetti
Che di più riveder non ha speranza,
E ciò, che vive ancor, morto non piange.

† Se l'importuna
Morte tè vuol rapir, brami tu dunque
Che nella stanza d'un ostier ti colga
Lunge da tuoi, trà ignoti volti, e in braccio
D'un servo, che fedel prima, ma guasto

Furnished with snow-white linen, silks, and goods
 Of price, till in his heart at least he kills thee?
 No pious kinsman comes, no weeping friend,
 To close thine eyes; nor can thy languid hand
Clasp with faint grasp some dear and faithful palm.
 Thy dying wandering eyes in vain would rest
 Upon some much-loved object, till at length,
 Discerning nought they love to gaze upon,
 They close amid thy sighs.

The Cavaliere Pindemonti, the brother of the Marquis whom we mentioned in a preceding chapter, has likewise written a tragedy, the hero of which is Arminius, the great antagonist of the Romans, and the liberator of Germany. We have not space to give any extracts from this piece, as we have already occupied ourselves so long with the drama. It will be sufficient to mention the general impression which this tragedy leaves upon the mind,—that it is the composition of a high-minded man, who has delighted to describe a noble character.

The Abbate Aurelio Bertola, of Rimini, was the friend of the Cavaliere Pindemonti, to whom

Anch'ei dal lungo viaggiar, tuoi bianchi
 Lini, le sete, e i preziosi arredi
 Mangia con gli occhi, e nel suo cor t'uccide?
 Non pietà di congiunto, non d'amico
 Vienti a chiuder le ciglia; debilmente
 Stringer non puoi con la mano mancante
 Una man cara, e un caro oggetto indarno
 Da' moribondi erranti occhi cercato,
 Gli chini sul tuo sen con un sospiro.

he addressed several of his poetical productions. He died about the year 1798, leaving three volumes of poems; amongst which his fables hold the highest rank. In grace and simplicity he surpasses Pignotti, though he is inferior to him in harmony and colouring. His manner of relating a story is so perfectly infantine, that to translate his poems as they deserve would require even greater talents than he himself possessed. It would be necessary to endow a language, by no means so expressively simple as his own, with those graces, which in him are the spontaneous gift of nature. I shall, however, venture to give the fable of the Lizard and the Crocodile.

* A Lizard, one day,
In a weak little voice,
To a Crocodile said,
“ Oh, how much I rejoice

That I am permitted
At length to behold
One of my little family
So great and so bold!

* [The Translator fears that, in the English version, the reader will doubly feel the force of M. de Sismondi's observation. Tr.]

Una lucertoletta
Diceva al cocodrillo :
O quanto mi diletta
Di veder finalmente

I have come fifty miles, Sir,
To look in your face;
For you're very much honoured
By all of our race.

Though we creep through the herbage
And chinks in the ground,
Yet the true ancient blood, Sir,
Within us is found."

Through all this politeness
King Crocodile dozed;
But just as 'twas ended
His eyes he unclosed;

And asking the meaning,
The Lizard, elate,
Began the long story
Again to relate.

But, as he thus open'd
His mouth to reply,
The Crocodile, snoring,
Again shut his eye.

Un della mia famiglia
Si grande e si potente!
Ho fatto mille miglia
Per venirvi a vederè:
Sire, trà noi si serba
Di voi memoria viva,
Benche fuggiam tra l' erba
E il sassoso sentiere,
In sen però non langue
L' onor del prisco sangue.
L' anfibio rè dormiva

The admiration of Bertola for Gessner, with whom he was acquainted at Zurich, and upon whom he wrote an eulogy, in some degree shews the nature of his talents. Though he has not composed any pastorals, yet his poems display the same sort of love for the country, and the same delicacy and tenderness of feeling, mingled with some degree of affectation. We feel as though we were satiated with milk and honey.

Clemente Bondi, of Parma, is known as the author of two volumes of poems. A canzone on the abolition of the Jesuits gives us to understand that he was himself a member of that order. When he believed that he had for ever abandoned the cares of this life, the suppression of the Jesuits again threw him into the world. His indignation against the supreme Pontiff, who had thus consented to the dispersion of his most faithful servants, is expressed with a strength of feeling which we rarely find in the Italian poets. Except upon this single occasion, when he was

A questi complimenti ;
 Pur sugli ultimi accenti
 Dal sonno si riscosse
 E addimandò chi fosse ;
 La parentela antica,
 Il cammin, la fatica,
 Quella gli torna a dire :
 Ed ei torna a dormire.

Farola xvii. p. 29.

animated by personal interest, Bondi seems to be destined to fill the office of Poet Laureate of the feast; which indeed may also be said of Bertola, and some others. The amiable Abbate was invited to the neighbouring mansion, where he was entreated to write an épithalamium for a marriage, or some congratulatory verses at a christening, or some stanzas for the fête of the Lord or the Lady, or some pretty couplet on a journey, or on some *villeggiatura* more gay than usual. Bondi accomplishes all this task-work in an ingenious and sometimes a graceful style, but without any traces of inspiration. A light little poem, *La Giornata Villereccia; A Day in the Country*, is written with liveliness and elegance; but if the flatteries addressed by Horace to Augustus are tiresome to us, how can we be expected to endure those of Bondi to Silvio Martinengo, whose only merit, as far as we know, was, that he was the possessor of a country-house not far from Bologna, at which our author used to be hospitably entertained. Amongst these poems, written by particular desire, there are a great number of sonnets of which I have perused only a few. They appear, however, richer in ideas, and less full of pompous phrases than the generality of Italian sonnets; but who has the courage to read such a collection through?

A poem on Conversation, some descriptive verses written on a journey, some lines to Nice, and a

few amatory canzoni, addressed to an imaginary fair one, complete the catalogue of Bondi's works. In every one of his poems there may be remarked the absence of the *estro*, or true creative inspiration. If an Abbate will be poetical, let him write religious poems, if such be his talent, or let him forget, and suffer us also to forget, that he is an Abbate. I know not whether, in fact, Bondi was of a warm temperament; but his amatory effusions certainly appear to me not to be inspired by love. Because he was a poet, he imagined it necessary to sing the charms of Nice and Lycoris; and this, too, without displaying any real passion or real tenderness, because he was an Abbate, and must, therefore, be content with displaying the ingenuity of his wit. With regard to his didactic poems, they are not devoid either of wit or of imagination; but we require other attractions to relieve and give a zest to compositions of so cold a character.

Giuseppe Parini, a native of Milan, who died at an advanced age during the revolution, is equal to Savioli in his love-poems; and, like him, is an imitator of Anacreon. His verses display real inspiration, and feelings both delicate and tender; and his love always appears to be an overflowing of happiness. He has imitated the Rape of the Lock in his *Day of a Man of the World*. With much wit, elegance, and refinement, he supposes himself giving a lecture on the employment of the

morning, the day, and the evening, to a young gentleman, who neither knows, nor wishes to know, any other occupations than such as luxury and pleasure can afford. He has painted high society with some delicate satirical touches; and whilst he has adorned that effeminate life with all the graces of his pencil, he has yet succeeded in making those, who devote themselves to it, ashamed of their uselessness and unreal virtues*.

* We adduce, in the history of a favourite dog, an example of Parini's talent in painting, and of his manner of conveying a moral lesson.

Or le sovviene il giorno,
 Ahi fero giorno! allor che la sua bella
 Vergine cuccia, delle Grazie alunna,
 Giovenilmente vezzeffiando, il piede
 Villan del servo con l' eburneo dente
 Segnò di lieve nota: ed egli audace
 Con sacrilego piè lanciolla; e quella
 Tre volte rotollò; tre volte scosse
 Gli scompigliati peli, e dalle molli
 Nari soffiò la polvere rodente.
 Indi i gemiti alzando: aita, aita!
 Parca dicesse; e dalle aurate volte
 A lei l' impietosita Eco rispose;
 E dagl' infimi chiostri i mesti servi
 Asceser tutti; e dalle somme stanze
 Le damigelle pallide tremanti
 Precipitaro. Accorse ognuno; il volto
 Fu spruzzato d' essenze alla sua dama
 Ella rinvenne alfin: l' ira, il dolore,
 L'agitavano ancor: fulminei sguardi

Parini, indeed, was a man of a high mind, who, amidst the various revolutions which we have witnessed, deserved and obtained the respect of all parties. The love of liberty and the love of virtue, which were united in his heart, give a noble character to his verses; and although there are few of them written on subjects of public interest, yet even in his most trifling pieces, we recognize the pen of an honest man and a good citizen. An Epistle to Sylvia, who, in 1795, appeared in a dress of a new fashion, which was called *A la Victime*,

Gettò sul servo, e con languida voce
 Chiamò tre volte la sua cuccia; e questa
 Al sen le corse; in suo tenor vendetta
 Chieder sembrolle: e tu vendetta avesti,
 Vergine cuccia, delle Grazie alunna.
 L'empio servo tremò; con gli occhi al suolo
 Udì la sua condanna. A lui non valse
 Merito quadrilustre; a lui non valse
 Zelo d'arcani uffici: in van per lui
 Fu pregato e promesso; ei nudo andonne
 Dell' assisa spogliato, ond' era un giorno
 Venerabile al vulgo. Invan novello
 Signor sperò; che le pietose dame
 Inorridiro, e del misfatto atroce
 Odier l' autore. Il misero si giacque
 Con la squallida prole, e con la nuda
 Consorte a lato, sulla via spargendo
 Al passeggiere inutile lamento.
 E tu, vergine cuccia, idol placato
 Dalle vittime umane, isti superba.

presents a rare mixture of beauty and of energy, of gallantry and of indignation. Parini makes his mistress blush for having dared to adopt a dress, the name of which alone recalled such terrible crimes. He shews the danger of becoming familiar with images of cruelty, and in so doing he displays a warmth of heart, a delicacy of feeling, a severity of virtue, and a paternal tenderness, which render this little piece truly eloquent and touching.

Onofrio Menzoni the elder, of Ferràra, is one of those religionists, who, gifted with real eloquence and original fervour, devote themselves to the career to which their vows have bound them. He has scarcely written any other than religious poems, which owe their reputation to the boldness of invention, and to the richness of imagery which they display. The poet's imagination, however, is generally exercised upon very trite subjects, and his most brilliant images are confined within a very narrow circle. Menzoni never attempted any great religious poem. His compositions consist, for the most part, of some sonnets on the Solemnities of the Church; and, whatever may be his reputation, he can never become a popular writer. The first, as well as the most celebrated of these sonnets, has been translated into French verse by an illustrious lady, by whom it was recited in the Academy of the Arcadians.

SONNET.*

When Jesus, uttering his last mortal sigh,
 Open'd the graves, while shook the earth's wide bound,
 Adam, his head, in terror at the cry,
 Uprais'd, and started from the rending ground,
 Erect. He casts his troubled eyes around,
 Fill'd with deep fear and dim perplexity,
 And asks, while doubt and dread his heart astound,
 Whose is the bloody form and pallid eye.
 But when he knew him, on his furrow'd brow,
 And on his wither'd cheek and hoary head,
 In deep remorse he dealt the furious blow ;
 And turning, weeping, to his consort, said,
 While all the mountain echoed with his woe,
 " Through thee I sold our Saviour to the dead !"

* Quando Gesù con l'ultimo lamento
 Schiusse le tombe, e le montagne scosse,
 Adamo rabuffato e sonnolento
 Levò la testa, e sovra i piè rizzose.

Le torbide pupille intorno mosse
 Piene di maraviglia e di spavento,
 E palpitando addimandò chi fosse
 Lui che pendeva insanguinato e spento.

Come lo seppe, alla rugosa fronte,
 Al crin canuto, ed alle guance smorte,
 Colla pentita man fè danni ed onte.

Si volse lagrimando alla consorte,
 E gridò sì, che rimbombonne il monte:
 Io per tè diedi al mio signor la morte.

Another sonnet, by Menzoni, though of a very different class, enjoys almost an equal reputation in Italy. It is burlesque both in the subject and in the rhymes. In other respects it is a true monkish sonnet, heartless and unfeeling. He complains of his misfortunes in being compelled alone to supply all the wants of his family. He complains of the voracity of his mother, of the silliness of his brother, of the coquetry of his sister, and of all the cares which these incumbrances produce. The mere sound of the verses and their whimsical rhymes, have con-

The following is the French translation alluded to in the text.

Quand Jésus expirait, à ses plaintes funèbres
 Le tombeau s'entrouvrit, le mont fut ébranlé.
 Un vieux mort l'entendit dans le sein des ténèbres,
 Son antique repos tout à coup fut troublé :
 C'était Adam ; alors soulevant sa paupière,
 Il tourne lentement son œil plein de terreur,
 Et demande quel est, sur la croix meurtrière,
 Cet objet tout sanglant vaincu par la douleur.
 L'infortuné le sut, et son pâle visage,
 Ses longs cheveux blanchis, et son front sillonné,
 De sa main repentante éprouvèrent l'outrage.
 En pleurant, il reporte un regard consterné
 Vers sa triste compagne, et sa voix lamentable,
 Que l'abîme, en grondant, répète au loin encore,
 Fit entendre ces mots : Malheureuse coupable !
 Ah ! pour toi, j'ai livré mon Seigneur à la mort !

tributed, more than the ideas, to the fame of this sonnet.*

The Abbate Giovan-Battista Casti, who died a few years since, at a very advanced age, is accounted one of the most prolific authors of Italy; but the greater part of his works cannot be noticed in this place. His best production is his mock-heroic poem of *Gli Animali Parlanti*; in which, he has given an epic form to his apologue, and, like Æsop, endowing animals with human passions, has pleasantly enough satirized the character of political revolutions; the high sentiments which are promulgated; the secret selfishness of the heads of successive parties; and the intolerance of those who will allow of no salvation out of their own pale, and who regard the reigning sentiments as immutable principles. He paints, in a very lively manner, the democratic ebullience of the dog, the aristocratical pride

- * Una madre che sempre è malaticcia,
 E non ha parte che non sia malconcia,
 Pure si mangia un sacco di salsiccia
 E si beve d'aceto una bigoncia ;
 Un paio di Sorelle, a cui stropiccia
 Amor le gote, ed i capegli acconcia,
 Ma nella testa impolverata e riccia
 Loro non lascia di cervello un' oncia ;
 Un picciolo fratello così gonzo
 Che dalla micia non distingue il cuccio,
 L'acqua dal vino, dalla pappa il bronzo ;
 Ecco ciò di che spesso io mi corruccio :
 Que' poi che mi fann' ire il capo a zonzo
 Sono un velo, una spada, ed un capuccio.

of the bear, the jovial disposition of Lion I., and the vices of Lion II. The joke is, however, rather tedious. It seems impossible that the interest of the reader should be sustained during a fable of twenty-six cantos in length, with more than six hundred lines in each canto; and the slovenly and negligent style of Casti does not contribute to remedy this defect.

At length we come to Vincenzio Monti of Ferrara, whom Italy, with one unanimous voice, has recognized as the first of ~~her~~ living poets. Fickle to an excess, irritable and full of passion, the sentiments of the present moment govern him with unbounded sway. Every feeling, and every conviction, is full of impetuosity and fury. Whatever object his thoughts are employed upon, his eyes immediately behold; and as it stands before him, a flexible and harmonious language is ever at his command, to paint it in the brightest colours. Persuaded that poetry is only another kind of painting, he makes his whole art consist in presenting to the eye of his reader the pictures which his own imagination has created; and he never writes a single verse which does not in this manner display some image to the eye. Educated in the school of Dante, he has again introduced into Italian poetry some of those bold and severe beauties, which adorned it during its infancy; and he thus proceeds from picture to picture, with a grandeur and dignity peculiar to himself. It is singular that

with so much severity in his manner and style, a man of his passionate feelings does not display a greater constancy in his principles. In many other poets this fault would not be perceived ; but circumstances have brought the versatility of Monti into more conspicuous notice, and his fame depends upon works which perpetually display him in contradictory lights. Living in the midst of the revolutions of Italy, he has generally chosen political subjects upon which to exercise his pen, and he has in turns celebrated every party as it became the successful one. We may suppose, by way of excuse, that he writes like an *improvvisatore*, that he works himself into an inspiration upon any theme, and that he seizes with avidity upon any political sentiment, however foreign it may be to his own feelings. In these political poems, which display such opposite principles, there is not perhaps sufficient variety of invention and style. *La Basvigliana* is the most celebrated of them. The readers of Monti will soon perceive that the author, who always copies Dante, not unfrequently copies himself.

Hughe Basville was a French envoy, who, at the commencement of the revolution, was massacred by the people of Rome, for attempting to excite an insurrection against the pontifical authority. Monti, who was then the Papal poet, as he afterwards was the republican Laureate, supposes that at the moment of Basville's death, a

sudden repentance snatches him from the pangs of the reprobate, and withdraws him from the punishments which he so richly deserved for his philosophical principles. In expiation of his sins, and as a sort of commutation for the tortures of purgatory, he is condemned by the ordinances of Divine justice to traverse France, until the crimes of that country have received their due reward, and to contemplate the misfortunes and reverses, which he had contributed to produce by the share which he took in the revolution. An angel conducts Basville from province to province, in order to shew him the desolation of this beautiful country; and after leading him to Paris, that he may witness the execution of Louis XVI., bids him behold the allied armies ready to rush down upon France, to avenge the death of the king. The poem ends without the reader being made acquainted with the issue of the war. It is divided into four cantos of three hundred verses each, and, like the great poem of Dante, it is written in the *terza rima*. Not only many forms of expression, many epithets and whole verses, are borrowed from the *Divina Comedia*, but the general idea of that poem seems to have been here imitated. An angel conducts Basville through the suffering world, and this faithful guide, who sustains and consoles the hero of the poem, plays precisely the same part which Virgil sustains in Dante. In thought, sentiment, and suffering,

Dante is the prototype of Basville. Monti has scarcely preserved in him any traces of his revolutionary character. He makes him feel more pity than remorse, and he seems to forget, when he thus identifies himself with him, that he had before represented Basville, perhaps without any real grounds, as an infidel and a most ferocious revolutionist.

The Basvigliana is remarkable, perhaps beyond every other poem, for the majesty of the verse, the nobleness of expression, and the richness of the colouring. *In the first canto, the soul of Basville bids adieu to his body :

And then he cast a glance upon the corse,
 His earthly consort, in whose every vein
 Anger and zeal had open'd life's red source.
 Oh sleep in peace ! he said : oh ! of my pain
 Beloved companion, till that final day,
 When the great trumpet wakens thee again !
 And lightly on thee press the earth's cold clay,
 Nor rudely blow the winds of heaven o'er thee,
 Nor ever traveller taunt thee on his way !
 Beyond the tomb there dwells not enmity,
 And on the blessed shore, where now we part,
 Justice and mercy reign triumphantly.*

* Poscia l' ultimo sguardo al corpo affisse,
 Già suo consorte in vita, a cui le vene
 Sdegno di zelo e di ragion trafisse ;
 Dormi in pace, dicendo, O di mie pene
 Carò compagno, infin che del gran die
 L' orrido squillo a risvegliar ti viene.

In the second canto, Basville enters Paris, with the angel, his guide, at the moment of the execution of Louis :

The Shade upon his guide, whose cheeks were stain'd
With tears, in wonder gazed, and on each street,
Along whose bounds still deepest silence reign'd.

Mute was the brazen trumpet, and the feet
Of artizans were heard not, nor did sound
Of anvil, or of saw, the strangers greet ;

A whisper only tremblingly crept round,
'Mid guarded looks, and fearful questionings,
While grief within each heavy heart was found.

Voices were heard, confused murmurings,
The voice of many a mother, who in fear
Her trembling arms around her infant flings ;

Voices of wives, who, as their husbands dear
Pass o'er the threshold, on their footsteps press,
And stay their ardent course with sigh and tear ;

But woman's love and kindly tenderness
Were conquer'd by their fury's fiercer power,
Which tore them from the conjugal caress.*

Lieve intanto la terra, e dolci e pie
Ti sien l'aure e le pioggie; e a te non dica
Parole il passegger scortesi e rie.

Oltre il rogo non vive ira nemica,
E nell' ospite suolo ove io ti lasso,
Giuste son l'alme, e la pietade è antica.

* E l'ombra si stupia quinci vedendo
Lagrimoso il suo duca, e possedute
Quindi le strade da silenzio orrendo.

We have elsewhere spoken of the two tragedies of Monti, which are the pride of the modern Italian theatre. We are happy, in concluding this account of the literature of Italy, to be able to contemplate a man of genius, who, still in the prime of his age, may yet enrich his language with masterpieces worthy of being placed by the side of those of the greatest writers of his country ; more especially if, yielding only to the dictates of genuine inspiration, he should refuse to sacrifice to the interests of the moment, a reputation which was made to endure for ages.

We have attempted by the extracts which we have made, and by the fragments of translations

Muto de' bronzi il sacro squillo, e mute
L'opre del giorno, e muto lo stridore
Dell' aspre incudi, e delle seghe argute.

Sol per tutto un bisbiglio ed un terrore,
Un domandare, un sogguardar sospetto,
Una mestizia che ti piomba al cuore ;

E cupe voci di confuso affetto,
Voci di madri pie, che gl' innocenti
Figli si serran, trepidando, al petto ;

Voci di spose, che ai mariti ardenti
Contrastano l' uscita, e sugle soglie
Fan di lagrime intoppo e di lamenti.

Ma tenerezza e carità di moglie
Vinta è da furia di maggior possanza,
Che dall' amplesso conjugal li scioglie.

which we have introduced, to make the reader acquainted with the poets, who, during the last five centuries, have shed such lustre upon the Italian language; or rather our object has been to awaken curiosity and to induce the reader to judge for himself. Italy still possesses another class of poets, whose fugitive talents leave no traces behind them, but who yet give birth for the moment to a very lively pleasure. We should convey an exceedingly imperfect idea of the poetry of Italy, did we omit to say a few words of the *Improvvisatori*. Their talent, their inspiration, and the enthusiasm which they excite, are all most illustrative of the national character. In them we perceive how truly poetry is the immediate language of the soul and of the imagination; how the thoughts at their birth take this harmonious form; and how our feelings are so closely connected with the music of language and with the rich graces of description, that the poet displays resources in verse, which he never appears to possess in prose; and that he, who is scarcely worthy of being listened to in speaking, becomes eloquent, captivating, and even sublime, when he abandons himself to the inspiration of the Muse.

The talent of an improvvisatore is the gift of nature, and a talent which has frequently no relation to the other faculties. When it is manifested in a child, it is studiously cultivated, and

he receives all the instruction which seems likely to be useful to him in his art. He is taught mythology, history, science and philosophy. But the divine gift itself, the second and more harmonious language, which with graceful ease assumes every artificial form, this alone they attempt not to change or to add to, and it is left to develop itself according to the dictates of nature. Sounds call up corresponding sounds; the rhymes spontaneously arrange themselves in their places; and the inspired soul pours itself forth in verse, like the concords naturally elicited from the vibrations of a musical chord.

The improvvisatore generally begs from the audience a subject for his verse. The topics usually presented to him are drawn from mythology, from religion, from history, or from some passing event of the day; but from all these sources thousands of the most trite subjects may be derived, and we are mistaken in supposing that we are rendering the poet a service in giving him a subject which has already been the object of his verse. He would not be an improvvisatore, if he did not entirely abandon himself to the impression of the moment, or if he trusted more to his memory than to his feelings. After having been informed of his subject, the improvvisatore remains a moment in meditation, to view it in its various lights, and to shape out the plan of the little poem which he is about to compose. He then

prepares the eight first verses, that his mind during the recitation of them may receive the proper impulse, and that he may awaken that powerful emotion, which makes him as it were a new being. In about seven or eight minutes he is fully prepared, and commences his poem, which often consists of five or six hundred verses. His eyes wander around him, his features glow, and he struggles with the prophetic spirit which seems to animate him. Nothing, in the present age, can represent in so striking a manner the Pythia of Delphos, when the god descended and spoke by her mouth.

There is an easy metre, the same which Metastasio has employed in the *Partenza a Nice*, and which is adapted to the air known by the name of the *Air of the Improvvisatori*. This measure is generally made use of when the poet wishes not to give himself much trouble, or when he has not the talent to attempt a higher strain. The stanza consists of eight lines with seven syllables in each line, and divided into two quatrains, each quatrain being terminated by a *verso tronco*, so that there are properly only two of the lines rhymed in each quatrain. The singing sustains and strengthens the prosody, and covers, where it is necessary, defective verses, so that the art is in this form within the capacity of persons possessing very ordinary talents. All the improvvisatori, however, do not sing. Some of the

most celebrated amongst them have bad voices, and are compelled to declaim their verses in a rapid manner, as if they were reading them. The more celebrated improvvisatori consider it an easy task to conform themselves to the most rigid laws of versification. At the will of the audience, they will adopt the *terza rima* of Dante, or the *ottava rima* of Tasso, or any other metre as constrained; and these shackles of rhyme and verse seem to augment the richness of their imagination and their eloquence. The famous Gianni, the most astonishing of all the improvvisatori, has written nothing in the tranquillity of his closet which can give him any claim to his prodigious reputation. When, however, he utters his spontaneous verses, which are preserved by the diligence of short-hand writers, we remark with admiration the lofty poetry, the rich imagery, the powerful eloquence, and, occasionally, the deep thought which they display, and which place their author on a level with the men who are the glory of Italy. The famous Corilla, who was crowned in the Capitol, was distinguished for her lively imagination, her grace, and her gaiety. Another poetess, La Bandettini, of Modena, was educated by a Jesuit, and from him acquired a knowledge of the ancient languages, and a familiarity with the classical authors. She afterwards attached herself to scientific pursuits, that she might render herself equal to any theme that might

be proposed to her, and she thus rendered her numerous acquirements subservient to her poetical talents. La Fantastici, the wife of a rich goldsmith of Florence, did not devote herself to such abstruse branches of knowledge; but she possessed from heaven a musical ear, an imagination worthy of the name she bore, and a facility of composition, which gave full employment to her melodious voice. Madame Mazzei, whose former name was Landi, a lady of one of the first families in Florence, surpasses, perhaps, all her contemporaries in the fertility of her imagination, in the richness and purity of her style, and in the harmony and perfect regularity of her verses. She never sings; and absorbed in the process of invention, her thoughts always outstrip her words. She is negligent in her declamation, and her recitation is therefore not graceful; but the moment she commences her spontaneous effusions, the most harmonious language in the world seems at her bidding to assume new beauties. We are delighted and drawn forward by the magic stream. We are transported into a new poetical world, where to our amazement we discover man speaking the language of the gods. I have heard her exert her talents upon subjects which were unexpectedly offered to her. I have heard her in the most magnificent *ottava rima* celebrate the genius of Dante, of Machiavelli, and of Galileo. I have heard her in *terza rima* lament the departed

glory and the lost liberties of Florence. I have heard her compose a fragment of a tragedy, on a subject which the tragic poets had never touched, so as to give an idea in a few scenes of the plot and the catastrophe; and lastly I have heard her pronounce, confining herself to the same given rhymes, five sonnets on five different subjects. But it is necessary to hear her, in order to form any idea of the prodigious power of this poetical eloquence, and to feel convinced that a nation in whose heart so bright a flame of inspiration still burns, has not yet accomplished her literary career, but that there still perhaps remain in reserve for her greater glories than any which she has as yet acquired.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Origin of the Spanish Language and Poetry. Poem of the Cid.

WE may be considered as making the tour of Europe for the purpose of examining, nation by nation, and country by country, the effect which was produced by the mixture of the two great races of men, the northern and the southern. We are thus present, as it were, at the birth of the modern languages, and of that genius and literature with which they were accompanied. We remark the local circumstances which modified each simultaneous developement. We behold the formation of national taste and genius; and we are enabled to understand in what manner each nation of Europe created a literature which differed from the rest, not only in the rules which it laid down, but likewise in the object which it proposed to itself, and in the means which it took to secure the accomplishment of that object. Having already traversed Provence, the North of France, and Italy, we now arrive at Spain; and in proportion as we advance, the difficulty of our task increases. With the language of which we are now about to treat, we are not so familiarly ac-

quainted as with the Italian, nor is it indeed generally known. Spanish books, moreover, are rare in France and difficult to be procured; and there are scarcely any of the writers in that language whose works have been translated, and whose fame has become general throughout Europe. The Germans alone have studied the literary history of Spain with zeal and attention; and, notwithstanding the efforts I have made to procure the original authors in the most celebrated libraries of those Italian towns over which Spanish princes have reigned, I shall yet be compelled occasionally to form my judgment on the credit of other writers, and to consult the German authors, Bouterwek, Dieze, and Schlegel. The number of Spanish writers, also, is very considerable, and their fecundity is most appalling. For example, there are more dramas in the Spanish, than in all the other languages of Europe put together; and it cannot be allowed us to judge of these compositions by specimens chosen by chance from the bulk. The very peculiar national taste of the Spaniards likewise augments the difficulty we feel in becoming acquainted with them. The literature of the nations upon which we have hitherto been employed, and of those of which we have yet to treat, was European: the literature of Spain, on the contrary, is decidedly oriental. Its spirit, its pomp, its object, all belong to another sphere of ideas—to another world.

We must become perfectly familiar with it before we can pretend to judge of it, and nothing could be more unjust than to estimate by our notions of poetry, which the Spaniards neither know nor regard, works which have been composed upon absolutely different principles.

On the other hand, the literature of Spain will amply repay the labour which an examination of it requires. This brave and chivalrous nation, whose pride and dignity have passed into a proverb, is reflected in its literature, in which we may delight to find all the distinctive traits which characterise the part which the Spaniards have acted in Europe. The same nation which opposed so strong a barrier to the Saracen invaders, which maintained for five centuries its civil and religious liberties, and which, after it had lost both the one and the other, under Charles V. and his successors, seemed desirous of burying both Europe and the New World under the ruins of its own constitution, has also displayed in its literature, the loftiness and grandeur of its character, and the power and richness of its imagination. In its early poems, we again behold the heroism of its ancient knights; and in the poets of its brightest age, we recognize the magnificence of the court of Charles V.; when the same men who led armies from victory to victory likewise held the first rank in the empire of letters. Even in the universal decay which

succeeded, we behold the loftiness of the Spanish character. The poets of later times sunk under the weight of their riches, and yielded to the strength of their own efforts, less for the purpose of vanquishing others, than of surpassing themselves.

The literature of Spain manifests itself in sudden and fitful lights. We admire it for an instant, and it is again lost in obscurity; but these glimpses always induce a desire to see more of it. The first tragic writer of the French stage borrowed his grandeur from the Spaniards; and, after the *Cid*, which he imitated from Guillen de Castro, many tragi-comic pieces and chivalric dramas transport us into Spain. The celebrated romance-writer, Le Sage, has displayed all the gaiety of a Spaniard's genius; and *Gil Blas*, though the production of a Frenchman, is completely Spanish in manners, in spirit, and in action. *Don Quixote* is well known to every nation as one of the most animated, witty, and pleasant satires in the world. A few novels translated by M. de Florian, and some dramatic pieces which Beaumarchais has adapted to our stage from the Spanish, have once more awakened our curiosity with regard to this peculiar country, yet without satisfying it; and its literature is still very little known to the French.

At the period of the subversion of the empire of the West, during the reign of Honorius, Spain

was invaded about the year 409, by the Suevi, the Alani, the Vandals, and the Visigoths. This nation, which for six centuries had been subjected to the dominion of the Romans, and had completely adopted the language and civilized arts of its masters, experienced those changes in its manners, its opinions, its military spirit, and its language, which, we have already observed, took place in the other provinces of the empire, and which were, in fact, the origin of the nations which arose on the overthrow of the Roman power. Amongst the conquerors, the Visigoths were the most numerous, which may be considered as a fortunate circumstance for Spain, since, of all the northern nations, the Goths both of the east and the west were by far the most just and enlightened; affording greater protection to the vanquished, and establishing amongst them an excellent system of legislation. The Alani were subdued by the Visigoths ten years after their entry into Spain; and ten years later, the Vandals passed into Africa, for the purpose of founding that warlike monarchy which was destined to avenge Carthage and to pillage Rome. The Suevi, who had preserved their independence for a century and a half, were at last overcome in their turn in the year 585. The dominion of the Visigoths was thus extended over all Spain with the exception of a few maritime towns, which still remained in the power of the Greeks of Constantinople; and

which, by their commercial pursuits, acquired great riches and an abundant population. The ancient Roman subjects who were elevated by the laws of the Visigoths to a level with their conquerors, being educated in the same manner, admitted to the same public employments, and professing the same religion, were speedily confounded with them; and when, in the year 710, Spain was invaded by the Musulmans, all the Christians who inhabited that country were amalgamated into one people.

It is the opinion of the Spaniards themselves that their language was formed during the three hundred years of the Visigothic dominion. It is evidently, the result of a mixture of the German with the Latin, the termination of the words in the latter language being contracted. The Arabic afterwards enriched it with a number of expressions, which preserve their foreign character in the midst of a language derived from the Latin; and this circumstance has, no doubt, had an influence on the pronunciation of the language, although not so much as to change its genius. The Spanish and Italian, possessing a common origin, yet differ in a very striking manner. The syllables lost in the contraction of words, and those retained, are by no means the same in both; insomuch that many words derived in each tongue from the Latin, have little resem-

blance to one another*. The Spanish, more sonorous, and more full of aspirates and accents, has something in it more dignified, firm, and imposing; while, on the other hand, having been less cultivated by philosophers and by orators, it possesses less flexibility and precision. In its grandeur it is occasionally obscure, and its pomp is not exempt from being turgid. But notwithstanding these diversities, the two languages may

* A few general rules on the transformations which different letters have undergone, may enable us to recognize words which have passed from one language to another. *F*, which is in fact a strong aspirate, is often changed in Spanish into *h*, and sometimes the *h* into *f*. Thus *fabulari*, to speak, is *hablar* in Spanish; in Italian, *favellar*; and as the *b* and the *v* are continually used for one another, this word is, in fact, precisely the same in both languages. The *j*, which is strongly aspirated by the Spaniards, is frequently substituted for the liquid *l*, so that *hijo* and *figlio* are the same word. The *l* liquid, in Spanish, is always used instead of the *pl* of the Latins, and the *pi* of the Italians. Thus, *planus*, Latin, *llano*, Spanish, *piano*, Italian; *Plenus*, Latin, *lleno*, Spanish, *pieno*, Italian. The Spanish *ch* supplies the place of the Latin *ct*, and the Italian *tt*. *Factus*, *hecho*, *fatto*; *dictus*, *dicho*, *detto*. The Spanish terminate their words with consonants more frequently than the Italians; and the language is full of words ending in *ar*, *er*, *os*, and *as*. The infinitive of verbs, and the plural of nouns, are terminated by consonants; but the former are accentuated, and the latter not. In short, the Italians have softened down the pronunciation of the Romans, while the Spaniards have preserved a great number of harsh syllables, and have multiplied aspirates in the letters *x*, *j*, *g*, *h*, and *f*.

still be recognized as sisters, and the passage from ~~the~~ one to the other is certainly easy.

There are no remains of the Spanish language during the dominion of the Visigoths. The laws which they promulgated were in Latin, in which language their chronicles also were written. Some people pretend that in these productions traces of the Spanish character are to be found. The Visigoths manifested an extreme jealousy with regard to their women, by no means common to the other northern nations; but all that remains of their history and their manners is too scanty to allow us to form any judgment respecting them.

The extreme corruption of the Goths, under their later sovereigns, was the cause of their ruin, at the period when the Arabs were extending their conquests in Africa. Roderick having driven the sons of Witiza, the legitimate heirs to the throne, into exile, mortally offended Count Julian, the governor of the provinces situated on both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar, by dishonouring his daughter. Julian and the sons of Witiza placed themselves under the protection of the Moors. Musa, the Moorish commander in Africa, dispatched Tariffa, or Tarikh, in the year 710, with a Musulman army to their assistance, and to these forces all the malcontent Visigoths united themselves. A pitched battle was fought between the hostile armies, each consisting

of nearly a hundred thousand men, at Xeres, on the borders of the Guadaleta, from the nineteenth to the twenty-sixth day of July, 711. The Goths were vanquished; a defeat which their king, Roderick, could never repair; and by this battle the monarchy of the Goths was destroyed, and Spain was subjected to the Musulmans.

A few valorous chieftains, however, retired into the mountains, and especially into that vast chain which extends along the northern part of the Peninsula. In 716 they drove out of one portion of the Asturias the Christian governor, whom the Arabs had placed there; and they at length succeeded in establishing their independence. This example was imitated; and from these fugitives proceeded the kings of Oviedo, descended from Pelagius, one of the princes of the family of the Visigoth kings; the kings of Navarre, the counts of Castile, the counts of Soprarbia, who afterwards reigned in Aragon, and the counts of Barcelona; princes who were destined at a future time to reconquer the Peninsula from the Arabians. But by far the greater number of the Christians submitted to the yoke of the Moors, who granted them the fullest toleration in religious matters, and who freely communicated to them the knowledge of which they were themselves masters. In a former chapter we have given some account of the literary splendour of Spain during the govern-

ment of the Moors, and of the influence which they exercised over the Christians. By a foolish policy, however, common to all Musulman conquerors, they neglected to amalgamate the vanquishers and the vanquished; and throughout all their successes they oppressed the nations whom they held tributary to them, by whom they were hated in return. It was by these means that they supplied the Spaniards, who had taken refuge in the mountains, with powerful allies in the Moorish provinces.

These mountaineers, who had preserved the religion, the laws, the honour, and the liberty of the Visigoths, together with the use of their Roman language, did not all speak the same dialect. In Catalonia the Provençal or Limousin, which so long engaged our attention, was spoken. In Asturias, in old Castilè, and in the kingdom of Leon, the Castilian prevailed; and in Galicia, the *Gallego*, whence the Portuguese had its origin. In Navarre, and in some parts of Biscay, the Basque was still preserved; a Celtic dialect, or, according to others, of African or Numidian origin, prior to the conquests of the Romans, which never intermingled with the Spanish language, nor exercised any influence over its literature. When the Christians, profiting by the extinction of the Caliphate of the Ommiades of Cordova, and the division of the Musulmans into a number of petty principalities, began, posterior to the year 1031, to recover Spain from the Saracens, they introduced into

the South the language which they had preserved amidst the mountains; and Spain was divided into three longitudinal portions, of which the inhabitants of each spoke a separate language. The Catalan, in the states of Aragon, extended along the ^{*}Mediterranean, from the Pyrenees, to the kingdom of Murcia; the Castilian occupied the centre of the country, and extended likewise from the Pyrenees to the kingdom of Grenada; while the Portuguese was spoken from Galicia to the kingdom of Algarves.

The Christians who had preserved their independence amidst the fastnesses of the mountains, were illiterate and rude men, though high-spirited, courageous, and incapable of bearing the yoke. Each valley regarded itself as a separate state, and attempted by its own strength to render itself respected abroad, and to maintain its laws and manners at home. These valleys had received Visigoth Kings, Counts who administered justice, and led the troops to battle. Their authority continued to subsist after the destruction of the monarchy, but they were rather considered as military leaders, and as protectors of the people, than as masters. Every man by defending his own liberty, became cognizant of his own rights. Every man was aware of the power with which his own valour endowed him, and exacted towards himself the same respect which he paid to others. A nation

composed for the greater part of emigrants, who had preferred liberty to riches, and who had abandoned their country, in order that they might preserve amidst the solitude of the mountains their religion and their laws, were not likely to recognize, to any great degree, the distinctions which fortune created. The son of the governor of a province might often be seen clothed in very homely garments; and the hero by whose valour a battle had been gained, might be found reposing in a hut. The dignity of the people of Castile, which is observable even amongst the beggars, and their respect for every citizen, whatever may be his fortune, are peculiarities in Spanish manners, which may no doubt be referred to the period of which we are speaking. The forms of the language, and the usages of society established at this period, became an integral part of the national manners, and display their ancient dignity even at the present day.

Civil liberty was preserved as perfect in Spain, as it can be under any constitution. The nation seemed to have created kings, in order that the authority, which necessarily devolved upon the sovereign power might be circumscribed within narrower limits. Their object was to provide themselves with able captains, with judges of the lists, and with chieftains who might serve as models to a gallant nobility; but they yet watched with jealousy any attempts to extend the royal

prerogative. Judges were appointed, to whom the nation might appeal under ordinary circumstances, and legal forms were established, by which the people were authorised to resist by force abuses of power. All classes were admitted to an equal share in the representation, and every Spaniard was taught to place a due value on his privileges as a citizen, and on his nobility as a Visigoth. The Court, the general nobility, and the equal balance of ranks, of which no one was suffered to feel degraded, preserved in the manners, the language, and the literature of the Spaniards, a kind of elegance, and a tone of courtesy and high-breeding, with somewhat of an aristocratical character of manners, which the Italians lost very early, because they owed their liberties to a democratical spirit.

When political liberty was once properly appreciated, religious servitude could not long continue to exist ; and the Spaniards therefore, until the time of Charles V., maintained their independence, in a great degree, against the church of Rome, of which they subsequently became the most timid vassals, when once deprived of their free constitution. The religious independence of the Spaniards has been little remarked upon, because the native writers of the present day are ashamed of the fact, and have endeavoured to conceal it, while foreign authors have formed their opinion of that nation from its

situation during their own time. We shall, however, have occasion to remark, in examining the early Spanish poets, that even in the wars with the Moors, as early as the eleventh century, they ascribe to their heroes a spirit of charity and humanity for their enemies, as a quality highly honourable to them. All their most celebrated men, as Bernard de Carpio, the Cid, and Alfonso VI., had combated in the ranks of the Moors. About the twelfth century, as we have already said in treating of the Troubadours, the kings of Aragon granted free liberty of conscience in their states to the Paulicians, and to the sectaries, who afterwards acquired the name of Albigenses. They likewise took arms in their defence in that deadly crusade which was headed by Simon de Montfort; and Peter II. of Aragon was slain, in 1213, at the battle of Muret, fighting against these crusaders, in the cause of religious toleration. In 1268, two princes of Castile, brothers of Alfonso X., quitted the banners of the infidels, under which they had served at Tunis, to give their assistance, at the head of eight hundred gentlemen of Castile, to the Italians, who were endeavouring to throw off the tyranny of the Pope, and of Charles of Anjou. At the conclusion of the same century, (1282) Peter III. of Aragon, voluntarily exposed himself to the thunders of the Church, in order to rescue Sicily from the oppression of the French. He and his

descendants lived under sentence of excommunication for nearly the whole of the fourteenth century ; nor ever consented to purchase the repeal of those censures by any concession of their rights. In the great schism of the West, (1378) Peter IV. embraced that side which was regarded by the Church as schismatic ; a course which was suited to his political interests, since Peter de Luna, who was afterwards Anti-pope, under the name of Benedict XIII. was his subject. His successors still continued to countenance the schism, notwithstanding the efforts of all the rest of Christendom to extinguish it. Alfonso V. of Aragon again renewed it, after the council of Constance, and even after the death of Benedict XIII. He consented in 1429 to the deposition of that shadow of a Pope, which he had himself created ; an act of condescension which was repaid by the Holy Pontiff with great sacrifices. Until the reign of Charles V., this monarch, his son, and his successors on the throne of Naples, were in a state of almost perpetual hostility with the Popes. We are not inclined to attribute any extraordinary merit to the Aragonese sovereigns, on account of these prolonged contests with the church. It is not to be doubted that they frequently sacrificed their religion to their temporal interests on those occasions ; but a nation, which, during three centuries, lived in a state of almost constant controversy with the papal power, and despised its excommunications, was undoubtedly

far removed from that blind faith and superstitious submission, to which Philip II. ultimately succeeded in reducing it. The last struggles in defence of the liberties of Aragon occurred in the year 1485 ; when the people rose to repel the introduction of the Inquisition, which Ferdinand the Catholic attempted to impose upon them. To resist the establishment of this odious tribunal, the whole population took up arms. The grand inquisitor was put to death, and his infamous agents were expelled from Aragon.

Although the minds of the Spaniards were not directed to the subtleties of scholastic theology, yet their ardent and passionate imaginations produced amongst them some mystics who, confounding together love and religion, mistook the aberrations of their feelings for divine inspirations. These were almost the only sectaries whom the Roman Church had occasion to condemn in Spain. Even at the period when they enjoyed the greatest religious liberty, few men devoted themselves to the examination of the orthodox dogmas, or to the discussion of points of faith. The Jews and the Musulmans remained steady in their belief, while the Catholics likewise persisted in their faith without taking the trouble to examine the grounds of it ; and religion was only employed to furnish occasional matter of controversy in a convent, or the subject of a hymn in honour of some saint.

The literary men of Spain have collected with great diligence, the earliest remains of their native poetry. D. Thomas Antonio Sanchez, librarian to the king, in 1779 published four octavo volumes containing specimens of the most ancient Castilian poets, of whose works he had been able to procure manuscripts. The first in the collection is the poem of the Cid, which, in his opinion, was written towards the middle of the twelfth century, that is to say, about fifty years after the death of the hero. Although the Cid, both in versification and in language, is almost absolutely barbarous, it is yet so curious on account of its simple and faithful descriptions of the manners of the eleventh century, and still more on account of its date, it being the most ancient epic in the modern languages, that we have determined to present a detailed analysis of the poem.*

In order to give the reader some idea of the place where the scene is laid, it will, however, be necessary to make a few previous remarks on the situation of Spain, at the period when the

* The MS. which has been preserved, bears the date of 1207, or 1245, of the Spanish æra, though it is certainly not the most ancient. M. Raynouard has promised us a Provençal poem on Boethius, anterior to the year 1000, and which must consequently be of higher antiquity than the poem of the Cid. This discovery is due to M. Raynouard, who as yet is the only person who possesses the means of forming a judgment upon the composition. [This poem may be found in *Raynouard*, Vol. ii. p. 4. *Tr.*]

Cid was written. Sancho III. of Navarre, who died in 1034, had united almost all the Christian states of the Peninsula under one dominion, having married the heiress of the county of Castile, and obtained the hand of the sister of Bermudez III. the last king of Leon for his second son, Ferdinand. The Asturias, Navarre, and Aragon, were all subject to him, and he was the first who assumed the title of King of Castile. To him the sovereign houses of Spain have looked up as their common ancestor, for the male line of the Gothic Kings became extinct in Bermudez III. It was in the reign of this Sancho, surnamed the Great, that D. Rodrigo Laynez, the son of Diego, was born, to whom the Spaniards gave the abbreviated appellation of Ruy Diaz, while the five Moorish Generals whom he had vanquished bestowed upon him the title of *Es Sayd*, (or, my Lord,) whence the name of the *Cid* had its origin. Muller conjectures that he was born about the year 1026. The castle of Bivar, two leagues from Burgos, whence he took his name, was probably the place of his birth, and perhaps a conquest of his father's. On the female side he was descended from the ancient Counts of Castile; yet, though his birth was illustrious, he was comparatively poor, before his valour had acquired him riches as well as glory.

D. Sancho divided his states amongst his children: D. Garcia became King of Navarre, D.

Ferdinand, King of Castile, and D. Ramirez, King of Aragon. The Cid, who was a subject of D. Ferdinand, entered upon his military career under that monarch's banners, where he displayed that marvellous strength and prodigious valour, that constancy and coolness, which raised him above all the other warriors of Europe. Many of the victories of Ferdinand and the Cid were obtained over the Moors, who being at that time deprived of their leader and without a central government, were much exposed to the attacks of the Christians. It was when the young Heschemel Mowajed, the last of the Omniades, was on the point of receiving at Cordova, in 1031, the oath of allegiance of all the Moors of Spain, and of being raised to the throne as Emir el Mumenin, (Miramolin, or Emperor of the West,) that a sudden cry was heard amongst the people: "The Almighty hath turned away his eyes from the race of Omajah! Reject ye the forsaken one!" The result was, that the Prince was compelled to take to flight, and to abandon his throne; and that every noble and powerful individual rendered himself independent in one or another of the cities of Moorish Spain as Emir or Cheick.

The arms of Ferdinand and the Cid were not, however, always directed against the infidels. The ambitious Monarch soon afterwards attacked his brother-in-law, Bermudez III. of Leon, the last of the descendants of D. Pelagius, whom he de-

spoiled of his states, and put to death in 1037. He subsequently attacked and dethroned his eldest brother, D. Garcia, and afterwards his younger brother, D. Ramirez, the former of whom he likewise sacrificed. The Cid, who had received his earliest instructions under D. Ferdinand, made no scrupulous enquiries into the justice of that prince's cause, but combating blindly for him, rendered him glorious in the eyes of the vulgar by these iniquitous conquests. .

It is also in the reign of Ferdinand, that the first romantic adventures of the Cid are said to have occurred; his attachment to Ximena, the only daughter of Count Gormaz; his duel with the Count, who had mortally injured his father; and lastly his marriage with the daughter of the man who had perished by his sword. The authenticity of these poetical achievements rests entirely on the romances which we shall examine in the next chapter; but though this brilliant story is not to be found in any historical document, yet the universal tradition of a nation seems to stamp it with sufficient credit.

The Cid was in habits of the strictest friendship with the eldest son of Ferdinand, D. Sancho, surnamed the Strong, and the two warriors always combated side by side. During the lifetime of the father, the Cid, in 1049, had rendered tributary the Musulman Emir of Saragossa. He defended that Moorish Prince against the

Aragonese, in 1063; and when Sancho succeeded to the throne in 1065, he was placed, by the young King, at the head of all his armies, whence, without doubt, he acquired the name of *Campeador*.

D. Sancho, who merited the friendship of a hero, and who always remained faithful to him, was, notwithstanding, no less ambitious and unjust than his father, whose example he followed in endeavouring to deprive his brothers of their share of the paternal inheritance. To the valour of the Cid he owed his victories over D. Garcia, King of Galicia, and D. Alfonso, King of Leon, whose states he invaded. The latter prince took refuge amongst the Moors, with the King of Toledo, who afforded him a generous asylum. D. Sancho after having also stripped his sisters of their inheritance, was slain in 1072, before Zamora, where the last of his sisters, D. Urraca, had fortified herself. Alfonso VI., recalled from the Moors to ascend the vacant throne, after having taken an oath, administered by the hands of the Cid, that he had been in no degree accessory to his brother's death, endeavoured to attach that celebrated leader to his interests, by promising him in marriage his own niece Ximena, whose mother was sister-in-law to Ferdinand the Great and Bermudez III. the last King of Leon. This marriage, of which historical evidence remains, was celebrated on the 19th of July, 1074.

The Cid was at that time nearly fifty years of age, and had survived his first wife Ximena, the daughter of Count Gormaz, so celebrated in the Spanish and French tragedies. Being soon afterwards despatched on an embassy to the Moorish princes of Seville and Cordova, the Cid assisted them in gaining a great victory over the King of Grenada ; but scarcely had the heat of the battle passed away, when he restored all the prisoners whom he had taken, with arms in their hands, to liberty. By these constant acts of generosity he won the hearts of his enemies as well as of his friends. He was admired and respected both by Moors and Christians. He had soon afterwards occasion to claim the protection of the former ; for Alfonso VI. instigated by those who were envious of the hero's success, banished him from Castile. The Cid upon this occasion took refuge with his friend Ahmed el Muktadir, King of Saragossa, by whom he was treated with boundless confidence and respect. He was appointed by him to the post of governor of his son, and was in fact intrusted with the whole administration of the kingdom of Saragossa, during the reign of Joseph El Muktamam, from 1081 to 1085, within which period he gained many brilliant victories over the Christians of Aragon, Navarre, and Barcelona. Always generous to the vanquished, he again gave liberty to the prisoners. Alfonso VI. now began to regret that he had deprived

himself of the services of the most valiant of his warriors ; and being attacked by the redoubtable Joseph, the son of Teschfin, the Morabite, who had invaded Spain with a new army of Moors from Africa, and having sustained a defeat at Zalaka, on the 23d of October, 1087, he recalled the Cid to his assistance. That hero immediately repaired to his standard with seven thousand soldiers, levied at his own charge ; and for two years continued to combat for his ungrateful sovereign ; but at length, either his generosity in dismissing his captives, or his disobedience to the orders of a prince far inferior to himself in the knowledge of the art of war, drew upon him a second disgrace about the year 1090. He was again banished ; his wife and son were imprisoned, and his goods were confiscated. It is at this period that the poem, from which we are about to make some extracts, commences. It is in fact the fragment of a complete history of the Cid, the beginning of which has been lost.

The opening, as it has been transmitted to us, is not deficient either in dignity or in interest. The hero is departing from Bivar, his native place, where every thing bears the marks of desolation. The doors are torn down, the windows driven in, and the rooms usually appropriated to the protection of treasure and valuable effects, are broken open and empty. The falcons' mews are deserted, and within them neither falcons nor

hawks are to be found.* The hero weeps as he quits these scenes; for to shed tears was never deemed by the ancient knights to be inconsistent with their character as brave men. He traverses Burgos at the head of sixty lances. The friends of a knight ever remained faithful to him in misfortune. The anger of a king could not separate those who had pledged their faith to each other in battle; and those who had marched beneath the triumphant standard of Rodrigo, cheerfully followed him into exile. The citizens of Burgos, crowding to their doors and windows, wept as he passed, and exclaimed, "O God! why didst not thou give so good a vassal a good Lord?" None, however, ventured to invite the fugitive to partake of the rites of hospitality; for Alfonso had in his anger declared, that whoever, in the city, should receive him, should forfeit his goods and be deprived of his eyes. The Cid, after having thus traversed the capital of Castile, was compelled to leave it by the opposite gate,

* The following are the opening lines :

De los sus ojos tan fuertementre lorando,
Tornaba la cabeza, e estabalos catando :
Vio puertas abiertas, e uzos sin cañados,
Alcandaras vacias, sin pieles e sin mantos :
E sin falcones, e sin adtores mudados.

. Sospirò mio Cid, ca mucho avie grandes cuidados :
Fablò mio Cid, bien e tan mesurado.
Grado a ti, señor padre, que estàs en alto,
Esto me han buelto mios enemigos malos.

without meeting a single individual who dared to offer him an asylum.

The language of the poet frequently does not rise above that of a barbarous chronicler; but he relates his incidents with great fidelity, and places them, as it were, before our eyes. He tells us how the Cid, advancing towards the borders of the Moorish territories, found that he lacked money to carry on the war; and as all his property had been sequestrated by order of the king, how he borrowed from a Jew five hundred marks of silver wherewith to equip his troops, giving him, by way of pledge for repayment, two heavy cases filled with sand, which, as he pretended, held his treasures, and which he commanded the Jew not to open until a year had expired.* This deception, the only one of which the Spanish hero was ever guilty, scarcely merited the name, since his word, which was alone worth a treasure, was pledged for the restoration of the money. The first Moorish spoils enabled him to repay the loan. The Cid had left Ximena, with his daughters, at the abbey of St. Peter; and she, hearing of his arrival at that place, commanded her six ladies to conduct her to his presence:

Her eyes were full of tears, and she sunk upon the floor,
And she tried to kiss his hands, and cried, Mercy, Campeador!
Oh! Born in happy hour,* to the evil of the land
Your enemies have made you here a banish'd man to stand.

* [The Cid was called, "The born in happy hour." *Tr.*]

Mercy! oh gallant Beard, to thee I bring thy daughters fair,
Who still are in their early years, and under God's good care.
That you will quit us soon, I see will be our fate,
And even while we live 'tis doom'd that we live separate;
Give us, for Holy Mary's sake, your counsel ere too late.*

The Cid placed his hand upon his bushy beard,
and embracing his daughters, strained them to
his breast, for they were very dear to him. As
his eyes filled with tears, he sighed and ex-
claimed :

Ximena! fairest woman, as my soul to me you 're dear,
But we must part, and I must go, and you must tarry here.
Still, if it pleases God, and the Holy Virgin too,
I hither will return to my daughters and to you ;
I'll marry them, and pass again some happy days with thee ;
Now farewell, honour'd lady, sometimes think of me.

Three hundred cavaliers attached themselves
to the fortunes of the Cid, and in company with
him abandoned Castile.† Don Rodrigo, ban-
ished from his native land, still continued to
combat against the enemies of his prince and his
faith. On the first day, he captured Chatillon de
Henarez, and after having divided the booty among
his soldiers, he abandoned the castle to the Moors,
and advanced further into their territories. He
soon afterwards besieged Alcocer, and after

* Sanchez, v. 265. t. i. p. 241.

† Sanchez, v. 422. p. 246.

having gained possession of that strongly fortified place, was in his turn besieged in it by three of the Moorish kings.* He had no hope of succour, and already the stores of provisions were beginning to fail, when, inspiring his soldiers with the courage of despair, he attacked the Moors, and routed them, wounding two of their kings, dispersing their whole army, and possessing himself of a vast booty. He immediately despatched an ambassador to D. Alfonso to compliment him on these victories, and to present him with thirty horses taken from the Moors, as his share of the plunder, while at the same time he instructed the messenger to have a thousand masses said for the good of his soul, at the Church of St. Mary of Burgos. Alfonso, softened by this tribute of respect, permitted the Cid to levy troops in Castile, where the name of the hero drew numbers of warriors to his standard. He sold to the Moors of Calatayud the fortress of Alcocer, which he was unable to defend, and divided the money amongst the soldiery. When the Moors of Alcocer beheld him depart, they lamented and exclaimed, "Go, my Cid! and our prayers go with you, while here we remain overwhelmed with benefits."†

The conquests of the Cid excited the jealousy

* Sanchez, v. 645, p. 254.

† Sanchez, v. 855, p. 261.

of the other Christian princes of Spain; and Raymond III. Count of Barcelona, an ally of the Moors, whom Rodrigo had attacked, defied him to battle. In vain did the Cid attempt to accommodate these differences; he was compelled to give battle, and was victorious, Count Raymond himself being taken prisoner. The Count's sword, surnamed *Colada*, worth a thousand marks of silver, was the rich trophy of this victory. The Count, ashamed of his defeat, and disdaining a dishonoured life, rejected the food which was offered him :

" I will not eat a morsel for the sum of all Spain's wealth;
Not for my soul's salvation, no, nor for my body's health,
Since, by such vagabonds as these, I have been vanquished."
Now listen what my Cid, Ruy Dias straightway to him said:
" Eat, Count, this bread, and drink this wine, and do as I
command,
And speedily from prison free, believe me, you shall stand;
Or otherwise you shall never more behold the Christian land."
Don Raymond answered him: " Eat yourself, Cid, and rejoice,
But as for me, I will not eat; so leave me to my choice.*

* A mio Cid Don Rodrigo grant cocinal adobaban;
El Conde Don Remont non gelo presia nada.
Aducentle los comeres, delante gelos paraban;
El non lo quiere comer, a todos los sozanaba.
Non combré un bocado por quanto ha en toda España,
Antes perderé el cuerpo e dexaré el alma:
Pucs que tales malcalzados me vencieron de batalla.

He maintained this resolution till the third day; and whilst they were dividing their immense booty, they were unable to make him eat a single morsel of bread. At last the Cid said to him :

*Eat, Count, or ne'er again Christian visage shalt thou see ;
But if you will consent to eat, and give content to me,
You and your children twain shall presently be free.*

The Count was moved, and demanding water to wash his hands, he ate, and the Cid placed him at liberty.

D. Rodrigo now turned his arms towards the South, though he still remained in the eastern parts of Spain. He took Alicant, Xerica, and Almenar, and prepared for the siege of Valencia, to which he invited all the chivalry of Castile and Aragon. After a siege of six months that city capitulated.* Here he established a bishop, and sent for Ximena and his daughters, before whom he marched to do them honour, mounted on his good horse Babieca, the name of which is no less celebrated in Spain than that of the Cid himself. Scarcely had Ximena safely arrived at the Alcazar, or palace of the Moorish kings, when

Mio Cid Ruy Dias odrides lo que dixo.

Comed, Conde, deste pan, e bebed deste vino :

Si lo que digo ficieredes, saldredes de cativo

Si non en todos vuestros dias non veredes Christianismo.

* According to Muller, whose Dissertation on the Cid has been often consulted by us, Valencia yielded to the hero in April, 1094.

Yousouf, the Emperor of Morocco, landed with an army of fifty thousand men. The Cid soon received intelligence of this :

This news unto my Cid thus suddenly being given,
He cried, " Thanks to God, my Father who is in Heaven,
That all that I possess is here before my sight.
There 's Valencia which I gained, and which I hold as my right ;
Valencia I will never yield, but only with my life.
Now, praised be God and the Virgin, my daughters and my
wife,

Those blessings of the land, have travelled to this shore,
And now shall I put on my arms, and never leave them more.
My daughters, and my wife likewise, shall see me smite the foe,
And to gain a home in foreign lands, the way to them I'll show ;
And how I furnish bread to them they by their eyes shall
know."

His daughters and his wife, from the towers of Alcazar,
Their eyes they lifted up, and beheld the tents of war.

" What is this matter, Cid ? God keep you safe from harm !"

" You need not, honoured Lady," said he, " feel the least
alarm.

The riches which are shewn to us are great and marvellous,
For scarcely have you here arrived, when God vouchsafeth us
For these, our dearest daughters, a marriage portion thus."

The Cid immediately gave battle to the Moorish king, and destroyed nearly his whole army, carrying off likewise a prodigious booty, a portion of which he dispatched, by way of paying homage, to King Alfonso, who offered to restore him to favour, provided he would give his two daughters in marriage to Diego and Fernando, the sons of Gonzales, Count of Carion. The description of the feasts which followed these marriages

completes the first part of the poem, which contains 2287 verses.

The Cid had bestowed the hands of his daughters on the sons of Carion only at the solicitation of the King. He regarded the marriages with great regret; and, indeed, on the very day of the nuptials, his sons-in-law shewed themselves little worthy of such an alliance. A lion, which Rodrigo used to keep fastened up in his palace, broke its chain, and rushed into the hall, where the festivities were conducting. The commotion was universal; but the terror of the children of Carion equalled that of the women. They retreated behind the guests, whilst the Cid advancing towards the lion, took him by the chain, and led him back to his den. On the arrival of a fresh Moorish force on the shores of Valencia, the old warriors of the Cid beheld their approach with joy, as they furnished an opportunity of again acquiring fame and riches; but his sons-in-law sighed for their peaceable retreat in the castle of Carion. The bishop of Valencia, more warlike than the young princes, seeking the presence of the Cid, exclaimed :

To-day, of Holy Trinity will I recite the mass,
And for that purpose from the town now hither do I pass;
To do that holy duty I stand your ranks before,
As well as for the great desire I have to kill a Moor :
Fain would I grace my holy garb, and sanctify my hands,
And now good licence do I ask to march before your bands.

My banner and my arms I bear, and if it pleases God,
Right soon will I rejoice my heart, and cover them with blood.
Your noble soul, my Cid, thus gladly would I cheer,
But if this favour you deny, no more I tarry here.*

The prayers of this prelate, though not of a very Christian character, were heard, and at the commencement of the combat, he overthrew two Moors with his lance, and put to death five more with his sword. The exploits of the Cid were still more brilliant. He slew Bucar, the Moorish king, who led the enemy, and gained possession of his sword named *Tizon*, valued at a thousand marks of gold. The sons of Carion, however, trembling in the midst of veteran warriors, and exposed to the ill-dissembled contempt of all the Cid's companions in arms, languished to return to their native place, and besought Rodrigo to permit them to carry their wives to Carion, to bestow upon them the investiture of those seignories and castles which they had promised them as their dower. The Cid and Ximena beheld their departure with the darkest forebodings, and their daughters Donna Elvira and Donna Sol, though they shed a flood of tears on this separation from their father, could not refuse to accompany their husbands. Rodrigo overwhelmed them with presents, giving to his two sons-in-

* V. 2380. p. 320.

law, in addition to very considerable treasures, the two swords *Colada* and *Tison*, which he had won from the Catalans and the Moors, and at the same time he charged his cousin, Felez Muñes, to accompany the travellers. The sons of Carion had, however, married the daughters of the Cid only from avaricious motives, for they thought themselves infinitely their superiors in birth, and as the cowardly are ever perfidious, they resolved to rid themselves of the burthen on their journey, and then, carrying off their treasures, to espouse the daughters of the king. They commenced their treacherous proceedings against the Moor Aben Galvon, King of Molina, Arbuxuelo, and Salon, an ally of the Cid, and his best friend. On their journey he had loaded them with presents, and entertained them with brilliant festivals; and, in return, the Infants of Carion meditated his assassination in order to gain his treasures. A Moor *latinado*, that is to say, who was acquainted with the Spanish, overheard the plot, and gave his master warning of it. Aben Galvon sent for the Infants of Carion, and reproached them with their infamous ingratitude:

If I did not respect the Cid, the world both far and near
How justly I had dealt with you should very shortly hear.
The daughters of my faithful Cid no more should wend with
you;

Nor ever more, believe me, Carion should you view:

But now I do dismiss you both, as villains and traitors too.

A gentle farewell, ladies, both : I wish to hear no more
Of these your husbands ; but may Heaven great blessings have
in store

For marriages that please my friend, the gallant Campeador.

The Infants of Carion continued their journey
until they arrived at the oak forest of Corpès.

The mountains there are high, and the branches seem'd to rest
Upon the clouds, and wild beasts did the travellers molest.
They found a pleasant orchard, through which a streamlet
went,

And there they presently resolved that they would pitch their
tent;

That by them and those they brought with them the night might
there be spent.

They pressed their ladies to their hearts, with the words which
love affords ;

But when the morning came, it seem'd they had forgot those
words.

Orders were given by them to load their baggage—a rich store ;
The tent in which that night they slept was folded up once
more ;

And the servants who had care of them had all push'd on be-
fore.

The Infants so had order'd it, that no one should remain,
Excepting Donna Elvira and Donna Sol, their wives twain.

* * * * *

The rest had push'd before, and these four remain'd alone,
When to their wives they said : “ In these mountains wild and
lone,

With shame shall you be covered : as for us, we travel on,
And leave you here, for you ne'er shall see the lands of Carion.
You may carry this news to the Cid, and say, we take our ven-
geance thus

For the good jest he play'd on us, when he let his lion loose.”

The Infants imagined that, in order to prove their courage, or rather in ridicule of their timidity, the Cid had unchained the lion on the day of their nuptials.

Thus having said, these traitors false their mantles they did doff,
And from their coward shoulders their pelisses did put off;
And they took the horses' reins, which when their wives did see,
"In the name of God," cried Donna Sol, "we supplicate that ye,
As ye have two trenchant swords, Colada and Tizon,
With them will slay us speedily, that we, when we are gone,
The martyr's crown not shamefully may be reckon'd to have won.
But whip us not like slaves; lest when we are beaten, you,
By the blows which you have given, shall be degraded too."

Their supplications, however, were useless. The Infants lashed them with the thongs, until the blood started from the wounds. They fell senseless upon the ground, and their husbands left them as dead, a prey to the birds and the wild beasts.

Felez Muñoz, however, whom the Cid had directed to accompany them, uneasy at their delay, waits until the party passes. When he sees the two Infants unattended by their wives, without discovering himself, which would undoubtedly have occasioned his death, he returns and finds his two cousins stretched upon the earth and weltering in their blood.

"Cousins! gentle cousins!" cried he, "waken you I pray;
For the love of God, awaken; and hasten, while 'tis day,
Lest the night arrive, and wild beasts should eat us on our way."

At his cries, his cousins both their senses did regain,

And opening their eyelids, saw Felez Muñoz again.

" Make an effort, cousins, for God's sake, cousins dear,

For if the Infants miss me, they 'll follow my footsteps here ;

And if God should not assist us, we all must die, I fear."

" For the love of the Cid, our father," Donna Sol she cried out
first,

" Bring us some water, cousin, to quench our raging thirst."

Felez Muñoz hearing her complaint, a stream of water sought,

And in his hat, which lately in Valencia he had bought,

To satisfy his cousin's thirst, some water straightway brought ;

They cruelly were torn, but he did exhort them so

That their courage he restor'd, and they both declar'd they'd go ;

So he placed them on his horse, and with his mantle he

Did cover them, and he took the reins, and they journey'd joy-
fully

Through the oak woods of Corpès, and out of that wild country.

At twilight, they had pass'd the hills, and reach'd the Douro's
side,

Where Felez Muñoz left them, for Santesteban, to provide

Horses and habits fit for them, and every thing beside.

The daughters of the Cid found an asylum at Santesteban, with Diego Tellez, and here they remained until the news of the outrage had reached Don Rodrigo, who sent for his daughters to Valencia, and promised them that, if they had lost a noble alliance, he would procure them one still better. Before he attempted to avenge himself, he dispatched an ambassador to King Alfonso,* representing to him that it was through his means

* V. 2960. p. 342.

that the marriages had taken place, and that the Infants of Carion had outraged the king as much as their father-in-law. He then demanded that in a Conference, Junta, or Cortes, this cause, in which his honour was committed, should be judged by the kingdom. Alfonso felt the insult which had been offered to the Cid and to himself, and he convoked at Toledo the Cortes of the counts and nobles to adjudge this cause at the expiration of seven weeks.

The very animated and dramatic description of the Cortes is, perhaps, the most interesting portion of the volume. Its value, as an historical painting, or representation of manners, is even greater than its poetical excellence. It would, however, be more easy to translate the seven hundred and forty verses which compose the catastrophe, than to preserve their spirit and features in an abridgment. The Cortes are assembled at Toledo*. The grandees of Castile arrive in succession at this city. Count D. García Ordoñez, the enemy of the Cid, is amongst the first. He encourages the Infants of Carion, and promises them his assistance, and that of the numerous party which he had formed in the kingdom. The Cid at length arrives, attended by a hundred knights, amongst whom are the bravest of those

* V. 3005. This city had been lately conquered from the Moors.

who, in conjunction with him, had conquered the kingdom of Valencia. He has requested them to provide themselves with their best arms, in order to be ready for the combat, if attacked; but, at the same time, he desires them to appear in their richest habits and mantles, that in the great assembly of the kingdom they may wear a pacific aspect. As soon as the Cid enters the assembly, the Grantees all rise to do him honour, except those who had taken part with the Infants of Carion. Alfonso himself testifies his gratitude to the hero of Spain, and his indignation at the outrage offered to him. He appoints judges to decide between the Cid and the Infants, selecting them from such as had not yet espoused either side.

The Cid, instead of immediately relating the insult of which he complained, reminded the judges, that, at the time when he gave away his daughters in marriage, he had bestowed upon those, whom he believed his sons-in-law, two swords of great price, *Colada* and *Tizon*, which he had won, the one from the Count of Barcelona, the other from the King of Morocco. He demands that the Infants, who had returned his daughters to him, should likewise restore this property which had ceased to belong to them, and which formed a trophy of his valour. Count Garcia advised the Infants to concede this point, in

which they were evidently wrong, and to yield up the swords. Rodrigo then demands that they should restore three thousand marks of silver, which they had received as a dowry with his daughters, to which they could make no claim. The Infants are compelled to yield in this instance also, and they pay this debt by borrowing from their friends, or mortgaging their lands. This pretended moderation of the Cid, who seemed desirous of recovering his precious effects, instead of trusting to the judgment of God to clear his honour, induced the Infants to believe that they should only have to dispute with him for the possession of this property. As soon, however, as the hero had recovered his riches, and had given his two swords to Pero Bermuez and Martin Antolinez, two of his most faithful relatives and lieutenants, he again addressed the king.*

* [The remaining translations of the specimens from the poem of the Cid are borrowed from the Appendix to Mr. Southey's "Chronicle of the Cid." Nothing can surpass the spirit and simplicity of this version, which induces us to regret that the author has not been prevailed upon to publish a complete translation of the "Spanish Homer." The extracts given in Mr. Southey's Appendix were, he informs us, communicated to him by a gentleman well acquainted with the Spanish language; and he adds, that he had never seen any translation which so perfectly represented the manner, character, and spirit of its original. *Tr.*]

" Justice and mercy, my Lord the King, I beseech you of your grace ! *

" I have yet a grievance left behind, which nothing can efface.

" Let all men present in the court attend and judge the case,

" Listen to what these Counts have done and pity my disgrace.

" Dishonour'd as I am, I cannot be so base,

" But here before I leave them, to defy them to their face.

" Say, Infants, how had I deserved, in earnest or in jest

" Or on whatever plea you can defend it best,

" That you should rend and tear the heartstrings from my breast ?

" I gave you at Valentia my daughters in your hand,

" I gave you wealth and honours, and treasure at command :

" Had you been weary of them, to cover your neglect,

" You might have left them with me, in honour and respect.

" Why did you take them from me, Dogs and Traitors as you were ?

" In the forest of Corpès, why did you strip them there ?

* " Merced ay, Rey è Señor, por amor de caridad.

" La rencura maior non se me puede olvidar.

" Oydme toda la cort, e pésevos de mio mal.

" De los Infantes de Carion quem' desondraron tan mal,

" A menos de riebtos no los puedo dexar.

" Decid que vos mereci Infantes en juego ò en vero :

" O en alguna razon aqui lo meiorare à juuicio de la cort.

" A quem' descubriestes las telas del corazon ?

" A la salida de Valencia mis fijas vos di yo,

" Con muy grand ondra è haberes à nombre.

" Quando las non queriedes ya canes traydores,

" Por qué las sacabades de Valencia sus onores ?

" A qué las firiestes à cinchas è à espolones ?

" Solas las dexastes en el Robredo de Corpès

“ Why did you mangle them with whips? Why did you leave them bare

“ To the vultures and the wolves, and to the wintry air?

“ The court will hear your answer, and judge what you have done.

“ I say, your name and honour henceforth is lost and gone.”

The Count Don Garcia was the first to rise :

“ We crave your favour, my Lord the King, you are always just and wise ;

“ The Cid is come to your court in such an uncouth guise,

“ He has left his beard to grow and tied it in a braid,

“ We are half of us astonish'd, the other half afraid.

“ The blood of the Counts of Carion is of too high a line

“ To take a daughter from his house though it were for a concubine.

“ A concubine or a leman from the lineage of the Cid,

“ They could have done no other than leave them as they did :

“ We neither care for what he says nor fear what he may threaten.”

With that the noble Cid rose up from his seat ;

“ A las bestias fieras è à las aves del mont.

“ Por quanto les ficiestes menos valgedes vos.

“ Sinon recudedes vealo esta cort.”

El Conde Don Garcia en pie se levantaba ;

“ Merced ya, Rey, el meior de toda España.

“ Vezos Mio Cid allas cortes pregonadas ;

“ Dexóla crecer è luenga trae la barba.

“ Los unos le han miedo è los otros espanta.

“ Los de Carion son de natural tal,

“ Non gelas debien querer sus fijas por barraganas ;

“ O quien gelas diera por pareias ò per veladas.

“ Derecho ficiéron porque las han dexadas.”

“ Quanto el dice non gelo preciamos nada.”

Esora el Campeador prisos' a la barba ;

He took his beard in his hand : " If this beard is fair and even,
 " I must thank the Lord above, who made both earth and
 heaven;

" It has been cherished with respect and therefore it has
 thriven :

" It never suffered an affront since the day it first was worn.

" What business, Count, have you to speak of it with scorn?

" It never yet was shaken, nor pluck'd away nor torn,

" By Christian nor by Moor, nor by man of woman born,

" As yours was once, Sir Count, the day Cabra was taken ;

" When I was master of Cabra that beard of yours was shaken,

" There was never a footboy in my camp but twitch'd away a
 bit ;

" The side that I tore off grows all uneven yet."

Ferran Gonzales started upon the floor,

He cried with a loud voice, " Cid, let us hear no more ;

" Your claim for goods and money was satisfied before :

" Grado à Dios que Cielo è tierra manda,

" Por eso es luenga que à delicio fue criada.

" Que habedes vos, Conde, por retraer la mi barba ?

" Ca de quando náscò à delicio fue criada ;

" Ca non me priso à elu fijo de mugier nada,

" Nimbla meso fijo de Morò nin de Christiano,

" Como yo à vos, Conde, en el Castiello de Cabra,

" Quando pris' à Cabra, è à vos por la barba,

" Non y ovo rapaz que non mesó su pulgada ;

" La que yo mesé aun non es eguada."

Ferran Gonzales en pie se levantó ;

A altas voces oudredes* que fablo.

" Dexasedes vos, Cid, de aquesta razon ;

" De vuestros haberes de todos pagados sodes.

* Probably *oudredes*.

" Let not a feud arise betwixt our friends and you ;
 " We are the Counts of Carion, from them our birth we drew,
 " Daughters of Emperors or Kings were a match for our degree,
 " We hold ourselves too good for a baron's such as thee.
 " If we abandon'd, as you say, and left and gave them o'er,
 " We vouch that we did right, and prize ourselves the more."

The Cid looked at Bermuez, that was sitting at his foot :

" Speak thou, Peter the Dumb, what ails thee to sit mute ?
 " My daughters and thy nieces are the parties in dispute.
 " Stand forth and make reply, if you would do them right ;
 " If I should rise to speak, you cannot hope to fight."

Peter Bermuez rose, somewhat he had to say,

The words were strangled in his throat, they could not find their way ;

Till forth they came at once, without a stop or stay.

" Cid, I 'll tell you what, this always is your way !
 " You have always served me thus ; whenever we have come
 " To meet here in the Cortes, you call me Peter the Dumb.

" Non crecies' baraia entre vos è nos.

" De Natura somos de Condes de Carion ;

" Debimos casar con fijas de Reyes ò de Emperadores ;

" Ca non pertenesien fijas de Infanzones.

" Porque las dexamos ; derecho ficiemos nos ;

" Mas nos preciamos, sabet, que menos no."

Mio Cid Ruy Diaz à Pero Bermuez cata ;

" Fabla, Pero Mudo, varon que tanto callas ;

" Hyo las he fijas, è tu primas cormañas,

" A mi lo dicen, a ti dan las oreiadas.

" Si yo respondier', tu non entraras en armas."

Pero Bermuez conpezó de fablar

Detienes'le la lengua, non puede delibrar,

Mas quando enpieza, sabet, nol' da vagar.

" Direvos, Cid, costumbres habedes tales ;

" Siempre en las cortes, Pero Mudo me lamades.

- " I cannot help my nature ; I never talk nor rail ;
 " But when a thing is to be done, you know I never fail.
 " Fernando, you have lied, you have lied in every word :
 " You have been honour'd by the Cid, and favour'd and preferr'd.
 " I know of all your tricks, and can tell them to your face :
 " Do you remember in Valentia the skirmish and the chase ?
 " You asked leave of the Cid, to make the first attack :
 " You went to meet the Moor, but you soon came running back.
 " I met the Moor and kill'd him, or he would have kill'd you ;
 " I gave you up his arms, and all that was my due.
 " Up to this very hour I never said a word.
 " You praised yourself before the Cid, and I stood by and heard,
 " How you had kill'd the Moor, and done a valiant act,
 " And they believ'd you all, but they never knew the fact.
 " You are tall enough and handsome, but cowardly and weak.
 " Thou tongue without a hand, how can you dare to speak ?

- " Bien lo sabedes que yo non puedo mas ;
 " Por lo que yo ovier' a fer por mi non mancará.
 " Mientes Ferrando de quanto dicho has :
 " Por el Campeador mucho valiestes mas.
 " Las tus mañas yo te las sabré contar ;
 " Miembrat' quando lidiamos cerca Valencia la grand,
 " Pedist' las feridas priméras al Campeador leal :
 " Vist' un Moro, fustel' ensaiar ; antes fugiste que al te
 alegases.
 " Si yo non uvjas' el Moro te jugára mal,
 " Pasé por ti con el Moro me off de aiuntar :
 " De los primeros colpes offe de arrancar ;
 " Did el cavallo, tobeldó en poridad :
 " Fasta este dia no lo descubri à nadi.
 " Delant' Mio Cid, è delante todos ovistete de alabar,
 " Que matáras el Moro è que ficias barnax.
 " Crovieronelo todos, mas non saben la verdad.
 " E eres fermoso, mas mal barragan.
 " Lengua sin manos, cuemo osas fablar ?

- " There's the story of the lion should never be forgot :
 " Now let us hear, Fernando, what answer have you got ?
 " The Cid was sleeping in his chair, with all his knights around,
 " The cry went forth along the Hall, That the lion was
 unbound,—
 " What did you do, Fernando ? like a coward as you were,
 " You slunk behind the Cid, and crouch'd beneath his chair.
 " We press'd around the throne, to shield our Lord from harm,
 " Till the good Cid awoke ; he rose without alarm ;
 " He went to meet the lion, with his mantle on his arm ;
 " The lion was abash'd the noble Cid to meet,
 " He bow'd his mane to the earth, his muzzle at his feet.
 " The Cid by the neck and mane drew him to his den,
 " He thrust him in at the hatch, and came to the hall again :
 " He found his knights, his vassals, and all his valiant men ;
 " He ask'd for his sons-in-law, they were neither of them there.
 " I defy you for a coward and a traitor as you are ;

- " Di Ferrando, otorga esta razon ;
 " Non te viene en miente en Valencia lo del Leon,
 " Quando durmie Mio Cid è el Leon se desató ?
 " E tu Ferrando qué ficast' con el pavor ?
 " Metistet' tras el escaño, de Mio Cid el Campeador,
 " Metistet' Ferrando, poró menos vales hoy.
 " Nos cercamos el escaño por curiar nuestro Señor,
 " Fasta do despertó Mio Cid el que Valencia ganó.
 " Levantós' del escano è pues' poral Leon :
 " El Leon premió la cabeza, á Mio Cid esperó,
 " Dexos' le prender al cuello, è á la red le metió,
 " Quando se tornó el buen Campeador :
 " A sos vasallos, violos aderedor.
 " Demandó por sus Yernos, ninguno non falló.
 " Riebot' el cuerpo por malo è por traydor.

- " For the daughters of the Cid you have done them great
 unright,
 " In the wrong that they have suffer'd, you stand dishonour'd
 quite.
 " Although they are but women, and each of you a knight,
 " I hold them worthier far, and here my word I plight,
 " Before the King Alfonso upon this plea to fight;
 " If it be God his will, before the battle part,
 " Thou shalt avow it with thy mouth, like a traitor as thou art."
 Uprose Diego Gonzalez and answered as he stood:
 " By our lineage we are Counts, and of the purest blood;
 " This match was too unequal, it never could hold good;
 " For the daughters of the Cid we acknowledge no regret,
 " We leave them to lament the chastisement they met.
 " It will follow them through life for a scandal and a jest:
 " I stand upon this plea to combat with the best,

" Estot' lidiaré aqui antél Rey Don Alfonso

" Por fijas del Cid Don' Elvira è Dona Sol.

" Por quanto las dexastes menos valedes vos.

" Ellas son mugieres, è vos sodes varones;

" En todas guisas mas valen que vos.

" Quando fuere la lid, si ploguiere al Criador,

" Tu lo otorgarás aguisa de traydor.

" De quanto he dicho verdadero sere yo."

De aquestos amos aqui quedó la razon.

Diego Gonzalez odredes lo que dixo:

" De natura somos de los Condes mas limpios.

" Estos casamientos non fuesen aparecidos

" Por consagrar con Mio Cid Don Rodrigo.

" Porque dexamos sus fijas aun no nos repentimos.

" Mientra que vivan pueden haber sospiros.

" Lo que les ficiemos serles ha retraido; esto lidiaré a
 tod' el mas ardido.

" That having left them as we did, our honour is increas'd."
 Uprose Martin Antolinez when Diego ceas'd :
 " Peace, thou lying mouth! thou traitor coward, peace!
 " The story of the lion should have taught you shame at least :
 " You rush'd out at the door, and ran away so hard,
 " You fell into the cispool that was open in the yard.
 " We dragg'd you forth in all men's sight, dripping from the
 drain ;
 " For shame, never wear a mantle, nor a knightly robe again !
 " I fight upon this plea without more ado,
 " The daughters of the Cid are worthier far than you.
 " Before the combat part you shall avow it true,
 " And that you have been a traitor and a coward too."
 Thus was ended the parley and challenge betwixt these two.
 Assur Gonzalez was entering at the door
 With his ermine mantle trailing along the floor ;
 With his sauntering pace and his hardy look,
 Of manners or of courtesy, little heed he took :

" Que porque las dexamos ondrados somos nos."
 Martin Antolinez en pie se levantaba ;
 " Cala, alevoso, boca sin verdad.
 " Lo del Leon non se te debe olvidar ;
 " Saliste por la puerta, metistet' al corral ;
 " Fusted meter tras la viga lagar ;
 " Mas non vestid' el manto nin el brial :
 " Hyo lo lidiaré, non pasará por al.
 " Fijas del Cid por qué las vos dexastes ?
 " En todas guisas, sabet, que mas valen que vos.
 " Al partir de la lid por tu boca lo diras,
 " Que eras traydor è mentiste de quanto dicho has."
 Destos amos la razon fincó.
 Asur Gonzales entraba por el Palacio ;
 Manto armino è un brial rastrando ;
 Bermeio viene, ca era almorzado.

He was flush'd and hot with breakfast and with drink.

"What oh, my masters, your spirits seem to sink!"

"Have we no news stirring from the Cid Ruy Diaz of Bivar?"

"Has he been to Riodivirna to besiege the windmills there?"

"Does he tax the millers for their toll, or is that practice past?"

"Will he make a match for his daughters, another like the last?"

Munio Gustioz rose and made reply;

"Traitor! wilt thou never cease to slander and to lie?"

"You breakfast before mass, you drink before you pray;

"There is no honour in your heart, nor truth in what you say;

"You cheat your comrade and your Lord, you flatter to betray:

"Your hatred I despise, your friendship I defy:

"False to all mankind, and most to God on high.

"I shall force you to confess that what I say is true."

Alfonso here imposes silence upon the assembly. He declares that he grants permission to the challengers to fight, and that by them the cause shall be decided. At this moment two ambassadors from Navarre and Aragon enter

En lo que fabló avie poco recabdo.

"Hya varones quien vió nunca tal mal?"

"Quien nos darie nuevas de Mio Cid el de Bibar?"

"Fues' a Riodouirna los molinos picar,

"E prender maquilas como lo suele far' :

"Quil' darie con los de Carion a casar'?"

Esora Muno Gustioz en pie se levantó:

"Calá, alevoso, malo è traydor,

"Antes almuerzas que bayas à oracion ;

"A los que das paz, fartaslos aderredor.

"Non dices verdad amigo ni à Señor,

"Falso à todos è mas al Criador.

"En tu amistad non quiero aver racion.

"Facertelo decir que tal eres qual digo ya."

the assembly, and demand of the Cid, with the consent of Alfonso, to grant his two daughters in marriage to the two Kings or Infants of Navarre and Aragon; a request sufficiently singular after the adventures which they had undergone. Rodrigo, at the solicitation of Alfonso, accedes to the demand. Menaya Alvar Fanez, one of the Cid's friends, takes this opportunity of again defying either of the Infants who may be inclined to meet him. The king, however, again imposes silence, and declares that the three first couple of combatants are sufficient to settle the question. He was desirous of adjourning the combat till the following day only, but the Infants of Carion demand three weeks in order to prepare themselves; and as the Cid wishes to return to Valencia, the king takes under his own protection the three knights who were to combat for him. He promises to preside at the combat on the plains of Carion; and having appointed the two parties to meet there in one and twenty days, he announces that those who fail to appear shall be accounted vanquished, and reckoned as traitors. Don Rodrigo then unties his beard, which hitherto he had kept bound in sign of his affliction; he thanks the king, and taking leave of all the grandees, to each of whom he offers a present, returns to Valencia. He endeavoured to make the king accept his good horse, Babieca; but the monarch answered that the charger would

be a loser by the change, and that it was fit that the best warrior in Spain should possess the best horse to pursue the Moors.

After a delay of three weeks, Alfonso proceeds to Carion with the three champions of the Cid. On the other side the Infants of Carion arm themselves under the superintendence of the Count Garcia Ordoñez. They beg the king to forbid their adversaries to use the two good swords *Colada* and *Tizon*, which they had restored, and which were about to be used against their late masters. The king replies that they had restored them in the Cortes without drawing them from their sheaths, and that it is now their duty to procure good weapons. He directs the barriers to be raised; he names the heralds and the judges, and then thus addresses them :

- " Infants of Carion! Attend to what I say : *
- " You should have fought this battle upon a former day,
- " When we were at Toledo, but you would not agree ;
- " And now the noble Cid has sent these champions three,
- " To fight in the lands of Carion, escorted here by me.
- " Be valiant in your right, attempt no force or wrong ;
- " If any man attempt it he shall not triumph long,

- * " Oyd que vos digo, Infantes de Carion ;
- " Esta lid en Toledo la ficerades, mas non quisiestes vos ;
- " Estos tres cavalleros de mio Cid el Campeador,
- " Hyo los aduj' à salvo a tierras de Carion.
- " Haved vuestro derecho, tuerto non querades vos ;
- " Ca qui tuerto quisierc fazer, mal gelo vedáre yo ;

" He never shall have rest or peace within my kingdom more."
 The Infants of Carion are now repenting sore ;
 The Heralds and the King are foremost in the place,
 They clear away the people from the middle space :
 They measure out the lists, the barriers they fix :
 They point them out in order, and explain to all the six :
 " If you are forc'd beyond the line where they are fix'd and traced,
 " You shall be held as conquered and beaten and disgraced."
 Six lances length on either side an open space is laid,
 They share the field between them, the sunshine and the shade.
 Their office is perform'd, and from the middle space
 The heralds are withdrawn, and leave them face to face.
 Here stood the warriors of the Cid, that noble champion,
 Opposite on the other side, the Lords of Carion.
 Earnestly their minds are fix'd each upon his foe ;
 Face to face they take their place, anon the trumpets blow.
 They stir their horses with the spur, they lay their lances low,

" En todo mio regno non habrá buen sabor."
 Hya les va pesando à los Infantes de Carion.
 Los Fieles è el Rey enseñaron los moiones.
 Librabanse del campo todos adegredor ;
 Bien gelo demostraron à todos seis como son,
 Que por y serie vencido qui saliese del moion.
 Todas las yentes esconbraron aderredor
 De seis ástas de lanzas que non legasen al moion.
 Sorteabanles el campo, ya les partien el sol ;
 Salien los Fieles de medio ellos, cara por cara son.
 Desi vinien los de Mio Cid à los Infantes de Carion,
 Ellos Infantes de Carion à los del Campeador.
 Cada uno dellos mientes tienc al so.
 Abrazan los escudos delant' los corazones ;
 Abaxan las lanzas abueltas con los pendones ; •

They bend their shields before their breasts, their face to the saddle bow.

Earnestly their minds are fix'd each upon his foe.

The heavens are overcast above, the earth trembles below,

The people stand in silence, gazing on the show :

Bermuez the first challenger first in combat closed,

He met Ferran Gonzales, face to face opposed ;

They rush together with such rage that all men count them dead,

They strike each other on the shield, without all fear or dread.

Ferran Gonzales with his lance pierced the shield outright,

It pass'd Bermuez on the left side, in his flesh it did not bite.

The spear was snapp'd in twain, Bermuez sat upright,

He neither flinch'd nor swerved, like a true steadfast knight.

A good stroke he received, but a better he has given ;

He struck the shield upon the boss, in sunder it is riven,

Onward into Ferran's breast the lance's point is driven,

Enclinaban las caras sobre los arzones ;

Batien los cavallos con los espolones ;

Tembrar querie la tierra dod eran movedores.

Cada uno dellos mientes tiene al só.

Todos tres por tres ya juntados son.

Cuidanse que esora cadran muertos, los que estan aderredor.

Pero Bermuez el que antes rebtó,

Con Ferran Gonzalez de cara se juntó ;

Ferienze en los escudos sin todo pavor ;

Ferran Gonzalez à Pero Bermuez el escudol' pasó ;

Prisol' en vacio, en carne nol' tomó ;

Bien en dos lugares el astil le quebró ;

Firme estido Pero Bermuez, por eso nos' encamó ;

Un golpe recibiera, mas otro firió ;

Quebrantò la boca del escudo, apart gela echó ;

Pasògelo todo que nada nol' valió ;

Full upon his breast-plate, nothing would avail;
 Two breast-plates Fernando wore and a coat of mail:
 The two are riven in sunder, the third stood him in stead,
 The mail sunk in his breast, the mail and the spear-head,
 The blood burst from his mouth that all men thought him dead.
 The blow has broken his girdle and his saddle girth,
 It has taken him over his horse's back, and borne him to the
 earth.

The people think him dead as he lies on the sand;
 Bermuez left his lance and took his sword in hand.
 Ferran Gonzales knew the blade which he had worn of old,
 Before the blow came down, he yielded and cried, "hold!"
 Antolinez and Diego encounter'd man for man,
 Their spears were shiver'd with the shock, so eagerly they ran.
 Antolinez drew forth the blade which Diego once had worn,
 Eagerly he aim'd the blow for the vengeance he had sworn.

Metiol' la lanza por los pechos, que nada nol' valió;
 Tres dobles de loriga tenie Fernando, aquestol' prestó
 Las dos le desmanchan, è la tercera fincó:
 El belmez con la camisa è con la guarnizon
 De dentro en la carne una mano gela metió;
 Por la boca afuera la sangrel' salió.
 Quebrár onle las cinchas, ninguna nol' ovo pro;
 Por la copla del cavallo en tierra lo echó,
 Asi lo tenien las yentes que mal ferido es de muert.
 El dexó la lanza, è al espada metió mano.
 Quando lo vio Ferran Gonzalez, conuuo à Tizon.
 Antes que el golpe esperase, dixo, "venzudo so,"
 Otorgarongelo los Fieles, Pero Bermuez le dexó.
 Martin Antolinez e Diego Gonzalez firieronse de las lanzas;
 Tales fueron los golpes que les quebraron las lanzas;
 Martin Antolinez mano metió al espada;
 Relumbra tod' el campo, tanto es limpia è clara.

Right through Diego's helm the blade its edge has borne,
 The crest and helm are lopt away, the coif and hair are shorn.
 He stood astounded with the stroke, trembling and forlorn,
 He waved his sword above his head, he made a piteous cry,
 "O save me, save me from that blade, Almighty Lord on high!"
 Antolinez came fiercely on to reach the fatal stroke,
 Diego's courser rear'd upright, and through the barrier broke.
 Antolinez has won the day, though his blow was miss'd,
 He has driven Diego from the field, and stands within the list.
 I must tell you of Munio Gustioz, two combats now are done;
 How he fought with Assur Gonzales, you shall hear anon.

Diól' un golpe, de traviesol' tomaba;
 El casco de somo apart gelo echaba;
 Las moncluras del yelmo todas gelas cortaba;
 Alla lebó el almofar, fata la cofia legaba;
 La cofia è el almofar todo gelo lebaba;
 Raxól' los pelos de la cabeza, bien à la carne legaba.
 Lo uno cayó en el campo e lo al suso fincaba.
 Quando deste golpe ha ferido Colada la preciada,
 Vió Diego Gonzalez que no escaparie con alma.
 Bolvió la rienda al cavallo por tornase de cara.
 Esora Martin Antolinez recibíól' con el espada.
 Un colpel' dió de lano, con el agudo nol' tomaba.
 Dia Gonzalez espada tiene en mano, mas non la ensaiaba.
 Esora el Infante tan grandes voces daba,
 "Valme, Dios glorioso, Senor, è curiarm' desta espada!"
 El cavallo asorrienda e mesurandol' del espada,
 Sacól' del moion, Martin Antolinez en el campo fincaba.
 Esora dixó el Rey, "venid vos a mi compaña,
 "Por quanto avedes fecho, vencida avedes esta batalla."
 Otorgangelo los Fieles que dice verdadera palabra.
 Lõs dos han arrancado: direvos de Muño Gustioz
 Con Asur Gonzalez como se adobó:

Assur Gonzales, a fierce and hardy knight,
 He rode at Munio Gustioz with all his force and might :
 He struck the shield and pierced it through, but the point came
 wide,
 It passed by Munio Gustioz, betwixt his arm and side :
 Sternly, like a practised knight, Munio met him there.
 His lance he levell'd steadfastly, and through the shield him bare ;
 He bore the point into his breast, a little beside the heart ;
 It took him through the body, but in no mortal part ;
 The shaft stood out behind his back a cloth-yard and more ;
 The pennon and the point were dripping down with gore.
 Munio still clench'd his spear, as he pass'd he forced it round,
 He wrench'd him from the saddle, and cast him to the ground.
 His horse sprung forward with the spur, he pluck'd the spear
 away,
 He wheel'd and came again to pierce him where he lay.

Firiense en los escudos unos tan grandes golpes :
 Asur Gonzalez, furzudo è de valor,
 Firió en el escudo a Don Muño Gustioz.
 Tras el escudo falsóge la guarnizon ;
 En vacio fue la lanza, ca en carne nol' tomó.
 Este golpe fecho, otro diò Muño Gustioz,
 Tras el escudo falsóge la guarnizon.
 Por medio de la bloca del escudo quebrantó.
 Nol' pudo guafir, falsóge la guarnizon.
 Apart' le prisó, que non cabel córazon.
 Metiòl' por la carne adentro la lanza con el pendon.
 De la otra part una braza gela echó :
 Con el diò una tuerca, de la siella lo encamó,
 Al tirar de la lanza en tierra lo echó.
 Bermeio salió el astil, è la lanza è el pendon.
 Todos se cudcan que ferido es de muert.
 La lanza recombrò è sobrél se paró.

Then cried Gonzalo Asurez, "For God's sake spare my son!
"The other two have yielded, the field is fought and won."

The heralds and king Alfonso proclaim that the champions of the Cid have conquered. The latter, however, are conveyed during the night from the lands of Carion, and return to their leader, lest the vassals of the Infants should avenge the discomfiture of their lords.

The two last verses of this poem inform us that the Cid died on the Day of Pentecost, without stating the year or the mode of his death. Commentators have supposed that it was on the 29th of May, 1099; and Muller has conjectured that it was in the month of July, in the same year. In examining, in the next chapter, the romances or ballads of the Cid, we shall meet with some circumstances relative to the death of the Spanish hero.

Dixo Gonzalo Asurez, nol' fírgades por Dios.

Venzudo es el campo quando esto se acabó.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Spanish Poetry of the Thirteenth Century.—Romances of the Cid.

THE Cid has already occupied much of our time, nor can we yet dismiss him. This hero, who was more instrumental than even the princes whom he served, in founding the monarchy of Castile, and who, during the course of his long life, led the conquering arms of his sovereign over nearly a quarter of Spain, is intimately connected with all our ideas of the glory, the love, and the chivalry of the Spanish nation. In the foreground of their history and of their poetry, the Cid stands conspicuous, while the renown of his name fills the age in which he lived. So dear, indeed, is his memory to the Spaniards, that the form of their most sacred and irrevocable adjuration is derived from his name; *affe' de Rodrigo*, by the faith of Rodrigo, says the Spaniard, who would strengthen his promise by recalling the ancient loyalty of this hero.

It is said that the original Chronicle of the Cid was written in Arabic a few years after his death, by two of his pages, who were Musulmans, and that

from this chronicle, the poem of which we have given some extracts was taken, as well as the romances which we are about to notice, and many of the most admired tragedies on the same subject in the Spanish drama. The poem, though a most Christian performance, bears some traces of its Arabic origin. The style in which the Divinity is spoken of, and the epithets which are applied to him, bear traces of a Moorish, rather than of a Catholic pen. He is called the Father of Spirits, the Divine Creator, and other names, which, as they are sufficiently accordant with Christian notions, the poet has preserved, although they betray their Musulman origin. This poem, which is anterior by a hundred and fifty years to the immortal composition of Dante, bears evident marks of its venerable antiquity. It is without pretension and without art, but full of the finest nature, and gives an excellent idea of the people of that age, so different from those of our own. We live amongst them, as it were, and our minds are the more completely captivated, because we know that the author had no design to paint a brilliant picture. Just as he found them, the poet has exposed them to our view, without the least desire to make an exhibition of them. The incidents which strike us, bore no extraordinary character in his eyes. There was to him no distinction between the manners of his heroes and of his readers, and the simplicity

of the representation, which supplies the place of talent, produces a more powerful effect.

With regard to the versification, I scarcely know any production more completely barbarous. Many of the lines are Alexandrines, that is, lines of fourteen syllables, with a cæsura on the sixth, which is accentuated; but many others consist of fifteen, or even eighteen syllables, so that the author seems to have arranged his expressions without ever attempting to adapt them to his metre. Many of the lines are doubtless altered by transcribers, but more have been left unfinished by the poet himself.

The rhyme alone enables the reader to discover that the composition is in verse, though even that is so barbarous, that sometimes we have considerable difficulty in ascertaining its existence. The Spaniards distinguish their rhymes into *consonant* and *assonant* rhymes. The latter, as we have formerly explained them, consist in the repetition of the same vowel. When the Spaniards had become more familiar with poetical composition, and had laid down certain rules of art, the assonant rhymes became as regular as the consonant. If the rhyme was not complete, being only framed from the vowels of the two last syllables, it was prolonged, and all the second verses of the romance were terminated by the same assonant rhymes. In the poem of the Cid, the assonants are very incomplete, and fail to satisfy

the ear. The poet rhymes the same vowel for fifteen, twenty, or even thirty lines, until he fatigues himself in endeavouring to discover more words suited to his purpose, and he is thus compelled to abandon his former for some new rhyme, which in its turn must share the same fate. This was the infancy of versification, of poetry, and of language in Spain, but it was the manhood of national spirit and of heroism.

Before entering upon the romances of the Cid, which were composed more than a century after the ancient poem, we must for a short time dismiss the hero, and notice some remains of Spanish poetry, which belong to the thirteenth century. Sanchez has published the works of two writers of this remote period, of whose lives he has likewise given us some account. The first is Gonzalez de Berceo, a monk, and afterwards a priest, attached to the monastery of Saint Millan, who was born in 1198, and died about the year 1268. Nine poems by him have been preserved, making together upwards of thirty thousand verses. To judge merely from the language and versification, these productions would seem to be posterior to the ancient poem of the Cid, though they cannot be compared with that composition in point of simplicity and interest. The metre is the same, but more carefully managed, and the lines are Alexandrines, sometimes consisting of four dactyls, sometimes of

four amphibrachs, which are always carelessly put together. The verses consist of couplets, of four lines each, and the lines of each couplet conclude with the same rhyme. This was the metre to which the Spaniards gave the title of *versos de arte mayor*, and which they reserved for their more serious works, while they destined the livelier measure of the *redondilhas* for their romances and songs. The former continued to be employed to the end of the fifteenth century; and Gonzalez de Berceo was the master of this style of poetry, which was regarded as the most noble, while in fact it was the most monotonous of all.

Gonzalez de Berceo, who was educated and passed his life amongst monks, scarcely possessed a single idea which was not to be found within the precincts of a monastery. His nine poems are all upon sacred subjects, and they treat rather of the Christian mythology, than of Christianity itself. The first contains the life of St. Domingo, or Dominick of Silos; not the celebrated founder of the order of friars-preachers and the Inquisition. The poet gives an account of his religious infancy, when, amidst the shepherds and guarding his flock, he nourished his pious fancies; of his reception in the monastery of St. Millan; the noviciate which he was compelled to undergo, and the courage

with which he resisted Ferdinand I. of Castile*, who demanded a contribution from the monastery, to assist him in carrying on the war against the Moors ; so that Saint Dominick was a sort of contemporary of the Cid, though his life is far from presenting the same degree of interest. The second part of the poem contains the miracles which St. Dominick wrought during his life ; the third, those which were worked by his intercession after his death. I have endeavoured to discover some extract remarkable for the imagination, the piety, or even the whimsicality which it displays, that I might give some idea of the style of a poet, whose elegance and purity have been celebrated by Sanchez ; but I must confess that I am unable to meet with a single striking passage. Every part is equally careless, common-place, and dull ; the language and the thoughts being those of monks of all ages, in which we in vain attempt to discern any characteristic marks of their times. I shall venture, however, to translate an account of a miracle which St. Dominick wrought after his death, for the delivery of a captive from the Moors. Such is the natural taste of man for the marvellous, that the most absurd miracles gain our attention. We conceive that the romancer displays imagination, while, in fact, it is our own imagination which

* Copla 83.

is in action ; and we rejoice whenever we read of a triumph over the powers of nature, the subjection to which is so insupportable to us.

“ I wish,” says Gonzalez de Berceo, “ to relate to you a precious miracle, and do you open your ears to listen to it. Let your faith therein be firm ; and the good father St. Dominick will become greater in your eyes. In a place called *Coscorrita*, not far from Tiron, there was born a valiant soldier, named Servan, who in fighting against the Moors was taken prisoner by them. This valiant soldier fell to the share of some cruel men, who led him in chains to Medina Celi, where they loaded him with irons, and enclosed him in a narrow cell surrounded with thick walls. The Moors by every means rendered his prison odious to him, and hunger and the weight of his fetters tormented him. During the day he was made to labour with the other captives, and at night he was shut up under dismal bolts. Often did they inflict stripes upon him, and wound his flesh ; but what was more grievous still, were the blasphemies which he heard these miscreants utter. Servan’s only resource during his suffering was Jesus Christ. O Lord ! cried he, who commandest the winds and the sea, take pity on my pain, and deign to look down upon me. O Lord ! I have no hope of succour, but from thee. I am tormented by the enemies of the cross ; I am maltreated because I

venerate thy name. O Lord ! who sufferedst for me death and martyrdom, may thy mercy succour me in my sins ! When Servan had finished his prayer, midnight was past, and the hour arrived when the cock was used to crow. Under all the weight of his punishments he still slept, but he despaired of his safety and of his life. Suddenly, in the midst of his prison, appeared a resplendent light ; and Servan awakened, and was afraid. Raising up his head, he called on his Creator, and making the sign of the cross, he exclaimed : O Lord ! help thou me ! Then it seemed that he saw a man clothed in white, as though he were a priest prepared for mass ; and the poor captive, terrified at the sight, turned aside his head, and threw himself upon his face. The vision then addressing him, said, Servan, fear not, but know that God hath heard thee, and hath sent me hither to release thee. Trust therefore in God, who will snatch thee from danger. My Lord ! answered the captive, if thou art he whom thou sayest, tell me in the name of God, and his glorious mother, what is thy name, lest I be deceived by a lying spirit. The holy messenger answered him : I am brother Dominick, formerly a monk. I was abbot of Silos, though unworthy, and there are my bones interred. My Lord ! said the captive, how may I escape hence, when I cannot even disengage myself from my irons ? If thou indeed art the phy-

sician who is to heal me, without doubt thou hast a remedy for this evil. Then St. Dominick gave him a mallet, made entirely of wood, without either iron or steel, which yet broke the stoutest bars as you would pound garlick in a mortar. When Servan had broken through the bars of his prison, St. Dominick bade him go bravely forth. Servan answered, that the walls of his prison were very high, and that he had no ladder wherewith to scale them ; but the holy messenger, sitting upon the top of the wall, let down a cord, one end of which the captive fastened round his waist, while the celestial messenger held the other in his hand, and sitting above him, pulled him up with his irons on as easily as if he had been a little bundle, and placed him on the outside of his prison. The good confessor then said to him, Fly, my friend ; the gates are open, and the Musulmans are asleep ; thou shalt meet with no trouble, for thou art under good protection, and shalt be far enough off by daybreak. Do not thou hesitate as to thy place of refuge ; but proceed directly to my monastery, with thy chains ; place them upon my sepulchre, where my body reposeth, and thou shalt encounter no obstacle, and mayest trust in me. After having instructed him in this manner, the white figure disappeared from his eyes. Servan immediately commenced his journey, and meeting with no obstacle, and finding no gate shut against him,

when day appeared, he was far on his way. At length he arrived at the monastery, as he had been commanded. It happened that a festival was held there on that day, it being the anniversary of the day whereon the church had been consecrated, and many priests were there assembled together, with a crowd of the neighbours. A Cardinal of Rome, who appeared as legate, was presiding over the assembly, and had brought with him a number of bishops and abbots, who formed a brilliant assembly. The captive, still loaded with his irons, in squalid garments, and wretchedly shod, appeared in the midst of them. His hair was uncombed, his beard was long; and he fell in prayer before the sepulchre of the confessor. My lord and father, he cried, it is unto thee that I ought to return thanks, that I again appear in a Christian land. It was by thy means that I escaped from prison; by thee have I been healed, and even as thou didst command, am I come to offer up to thee my chains. The report of the favour which the confessor had shewn him, was quickly noised through all the town, and there was neither bishop nor abbot, who did not shew Servan marks of his esteem. The legate himself did not refuse to chaunt the canticle *Tibi laus*, in company with a man so favoured by heaven, and moreover granted general pardons to the people, while all persons acknowledged the power of the holy confessor,

after so marvellous a miracle. A treasure like this, a light so shining as this, should cast its rays from a rich shrine; and if they before valued it as a precious relic, they now estimated it still more highly. The legate Richard preached his fame at Rome, and the Pope acknowledged him to be a most accomplished saint."

The next poem of Gonzalez de Berceo is a Life of St. Millan, the founder of the monastery to which the poet belonged. The Saint died in 594, before the invasion of Spain by the Moors. The various miracles which he wrought form the subject of a second book; and his appearance, long after his death, at the battle of Simancas, in 934, when the Moors were conquered, is related in a third book. If we are to believe a tradition which does not rest on any very solid foundations, this battle delivered the kingdom of Oviedo from a tribute of a hundred maids, which was yearly paid to the Musulmans. The courage of seven young girls of Simancas, who, being destined to this fate, cut off their hands, that the Moors might reject them, inspired the people who groaned under this yoke with spirit to throw it off. Berceo has made no use of this poetical tradition, which has furnished Lope de Vega with the subject of one of his most brilliant tragedies, *Las Donzellas de Simancas*. The monkish poet has suppressed every heroic circumstance, in order to bring forward his miracles. He has sacrificed

the glory of his countrymen to that of his saint, and the life and interest of his poem to a narrow and degrading superstition.

Another production of the thirteenth century, which has also been published by Sanchez, is the poem of Alexander, written by Juan Lorenzo Segura de Astorga. The editor assures us that this poem is not a translation of that which Philippe Gaultier de Châtillon wrote in Latin in the year 1180, and which was afterwards turned into French verse by Lambert li Cors and Alexandre de Paris. However, there is certainly a great similarity between the two works, which display an equal mediocrity. There is neither invention, nor dignity, nor harmony, to be found in this composition; and yet the absolute ignorance of antiquity in which the world was plunged at the period when it was written, renders the work interesting. For the author, unable to describe times of which he knew nothing, had recourse to those with which he was acquainted, and bestowed upon the heroes of Greece the manners, the sentiments, the prejudices, and the education of a Spaniard of the thirteenth century; nor is he ever able to get rid of his Christian phraseology. He dubs Alexander a knight on the Feast of St. Antherius, the Pope, (the third of January.) * He assures us,

* T. iii. Copla 78.

“ that the young prince being impatient to wage war against the Jews and the Moors, believed that he had already conquered the territory of Babylon, India, and Egypt, Africa, and Morocco, and indeed all the countries over which Charlemagne had reigned.” These anachronisms excite only a passing smile; but the most interesting and curious part of the work is that in which, in a Greek story, the manners and opinions of the thirteenth century are described: as, for example, in the lessons which Aristotle gives to his pupil.* “Master Aristotle, who was his teacher, had been all this while shut up in his chamber, where he had been composing a logical syllogism, and had not, day or night, tasted any repose.” When Alexander appears before him, inflamed with a desire to deliver his country from the tribute which it paid to the Persians, Aristotle recapitulates all the advice which he had formerly given, to fit him for the career which he was destined to run. “My son,” says he, “thou art a learned clerk; thou art the son of a king, and thou hast much perspicacity. From thine infancy thou hast shewn a wonderful regard for chivalry; and I hold thee to be the best knight of all who now live. Remember, that thou ever take counsel upon thine undertakings, and discourse thereof with thy vassals, who shall be more faithful to

* Copla 30.

thee when thou thus consultest them. Above all, beware of the love of women; for when once a man hath turned towards them, he pursueth them everlastingly, and daily becomes less valiant; nay, he is in danger even of losing his soul, the which would be a great offence unto God. Beware how thou trustest thy affairs to a man of low birth: be not drunken, and frequent not the taverns: keep firm and true to thy word, nor love nor listen to flatterers. When thou sittest in judgment, judge according to right; and let not avarice, nor love, nor hatred weigh in thy decisions. Beware of shewing thine anger amongst thy vassals. Never eat separate from them and apart, and appear not to be tired of them, if thou wouldst preserve their love. When thou ledest thine armies, do not leave the old warriors and carry with thee the young soldiers: the former are wise in council, and in the battle they will not flee." The arms and the equipments in which Alexander appears on the day when he is dubbed a knight, are highly precious. Some are the workmanship of the fairies, others of Vulcan; and every piece is gifted with some enchanted power, strengthening the courage, the virtue, and the chastity of the wearer. "All the riches of Pisa and Genoa would not have bought his tunic; and, as to Bucephalus, when he was harnessed, he was worth more than all Castile."* Having

* Copla 79.

clothed himself in these arms, Alexander, with a small retinue of knights, sets off in search of adventures to try his prowess. At some distance from his own territory, he meets with a king whom the poet calls Nicholas, who asks Alexander his name and occupation.* Alexander answers, "that he is the son of Philip and Olympias; that he is journeying through the world to exercise his strength, seeking for adventures in deserts and plains, sparing some and despoiling others; and that none can say that they have dared to treat him with disrespect." It was not, we see, without reason, that Don Quixote always reckons Alexander in the number of knights errant, and compares Rosinante to Bucephalus. The ancient poets of Spain knew no other heroism than that of chivalry, and had no conception of grandeur which was not gathered from the romances. The hero of La Mancha, who had studied history in their pages, was sure to find a knight errant in every hero of antiquity.

The martial poetry of Spain, a poetry truly national, and completely in accordance with the manners, the hopes, and the recollections of the people, was inspired by an enthusiasm which in its turn it contributed to nourish. Of this poetry we have already had some specimens in the history of the Cid, and we shall soon meet

* Copla 119.

with others in the romances. The two poems of Berceo and of Lorenzo Segura have given us some idea of the poetry of the monks during the same period, the pedantry of which betrays the ignorance of the authors, and in which the absence of truth in the incidents, in the feelings, and in the language, shews clearly that all the inspirations of nature were banished from their gloomy convents. We shall terminate the literary history of Spain, during the thirteenth century, with some account of a royal poet, Alfonso X. of Castile, who was born in 1221, came to the crown in 1252, and was named Emperor of Germany by four of the electors in 1257. After having been deposed by his son, he died in 1284. Alfonso was surnamed the Wise, from his acquaintance with astronomy and chemistry, and is known by a system which he proposed as to the arrangement of the heavenly bodies, and which subjected him to a charge of impiety; a treatise which must be considered merely as a commentary upon the complicated system of Ptolemy, to which he had devoted his attention. Alfonso, though he was not a good sovereign, was yet a great patron of letters, and introduced into Europe the sciences, arts, and manufactures of the Arabians. He invited to his court many of the philosophers and learned men of the East, whose works he caused to be translated into the Castilian, in which language he likewise directed the decisions of the courts, and the laws of the

Cortes to be framed; and in this earliest Spanish code, which is entitled *las Partidas*, is found that remarkable sentence which struck the attention of Montesquieu: *The despot cuts down the tree, but the wise monarch prunes it.* In fact, this monarch was the first to give that impulse to the literature of Spain, which was in the succeeding century so greatly accelerated. His writings contributed very considerably to the advancement of science, and something to the progress of literature. There is still preserved in manuscript at Toledo, a book of Canticles in Galician, written by him in honour of the Virgin Mary. The music for the first line of each canticle is given as if for chaunting. Two other productions in Castilian by the same royal author also survive. The first of these is a book of Complaints, *il libro de las Querelas*, composed between 1282 and 1284, in which Alfonso complains of his son Don Sancho and his nobles, who had rebelled against him and driven him from his throne. To judge from the commencement, this poem, which is written in verses *de arte mayor*, and in octave stanzas consisting each of two *quatrains*, appears to be worthy of the sentiments which ought to sustain a deposed monarch. The other poem which is entitled *The Book of Treasure, or The Philosopher's Stone*, is a pretended exposition of this hidden knowledge, which had long employed the attention of Alfonso, and

which he asserted had been communicated to him by an Egyptian sage. The introduction to this work is the only intelligible portion of it. It consists of eleven stanzas, in which the author recounts the mode in which he became possessed of the grand arcanum of the alchemists.* When he comes to explain the secret itself, the reader is presented with thirty-five stanzas of eight lines each, in cypher, which it is impossible for any one to comprehend; although a key is given, which is in fact just as intelligible as the cyphers themselves. When we recollect that Alfonso was deposed by the Castilians for having debased

' The following are the two first stanzas of the *Libro del Tesoro* :

Llego pues la fama à los mis oidos
 Quen tierra de Egipto un sabio vivia,
 E con su saber oì que facia
 Notos los casos ca non son venidos :
 Los astros juzgabà, è aquestos movidos
 Por disposicion del cielo, fallaba
 Los casos quel tiempo futuro ocultaba,
 Bien fuesen antes por este entendido..

Codicia del sabio moviò mi aficion,
 Mi pluma e mi lingua, con grande humildad
 Postrada la alteza de mi magestad,
 Ca tanto poder tiene una pasion.
 Con ruegos le fiz la mia peticion,
 E si la mandè con mis mensageros.
 Avères haciendas è muchos dineros
 Alli le ofreci con santa intencion.

the coin, by alloying the silver with copper, and issuing it as a pure silver coinage, we cannot help suspecting that the noble sovereign of Castile, and Emperor of the Romans, has bequeathed an enigma to posterity, which is incapable of explanation, and that his cyphers are absolutely destitute of all meaning. He had a great desire to propagate a belief that he had attained immense riches by his knowledge of alchemy, in order that he might impress his enemies and strangers with a high idea of his power.

The desire of celebrating the achievements of a hero, gave rise to the first attempt in Spanish poetry. To the same feeling did the art owe its perfection; while the verses were adapted to music, in order to render them more popular. The measure of these early romances, or *redondilhas*, was completely the reverse of the Italian; it changed from long to short, the verse containing four trochees, with an occasional defective verse. With regard to rhyme, each second line terminated with an assonant, while the first lines were unrhymed. It was in this metre that the deeds of many a brave Spaniard, and more especially of the Cid, were celebrated by anonymous poets. These romances were taught by mothers to their children, recited at festivals, and sung by the soldiers before battle; and being transmitted from mouth to mouth, long before they were committed to writing, they changed

their shape with each variation of the language, though they preserved their spirit under every alteration. The first romances of the Cid were probably composed soon after his death, and others were added at different periods, though it is difficult to assign their proper dates. They are generally filled with minute details, and have an air of truth about them, which proves, that, at the period of their composition, the hero of Spain was still well known. So completely national was his history, and so connected with the state of Castile, that every Christian soldier, in the achievements of the Cid, became acquainted with the glories of his country. In the three centuries which preceded the birth of this hero, and in the two which succeeded, the history of Spain presents nothing but one continued struggle with the Moors; and it would have been difficult to distinguish the various sovereigns who succeeded one another, during these five centuries, if the glory of the Cid and of his companions had not formed so distinguished an æra.

These popular romances were collected at the commencement of the sixteenth century by Fernando del Castillo, and reprinted in 1614, by Pedro de Florez, in one volume in quarto. In these collections, all the romances of the Cid are to be found, though not in chronological order. Herder, a German poet and philosopher, a few

years ago formed a collection of them, and arranged them so as to present a complete biographical account of the hero, translating them into verse of the same measure, with a scrupulous fidelity peculiar to the Germans.*

The life of the Cid may be divided into four periods; containing his exploits under Ferdinand the Great, under Sancho the Brave, under Alfonso VI., and in the principality of Valencia, which he had conquered, and of which he had constituted himself sovereign. The first period comprises his youth, the time at which Cor-

* There existed long before Herder's work appeared, a collection entitled *Tesoro escondido de todos los mas famosos Romances assi antiguos, como modernos, del Cid: por Franc. Meige. Barcelona, 1626, 8vo.* This little selection, instead of the seventy romances which Herder has translated, contains only forty, many of which are of little importance. The same romance is often differently given in different collections; for, as they were the property of no one, every editor altered them according to his taste. Thus the translations of Herder, who was acquainted with all the originals, and who has, with great taste and judgment, selected the best, are superior to all the Spanish collections. [The largest collection of the ballads of the Cid appears to be that which is mentioned by Sarmiento: *Historia del muy valeroso Cavallero el Cid Ruy Diaz de Bivar, en Romances en language antiquo, recopilados por Juan de Escobar: Sevilla, 1682.* This volume contains 102 ballads. See Southey's Chron. of the Cid, pref. x. Mr. Southey designates the greater part of these poems as utterly worthless. The reader, from the specimens here presented, may perhaps hesitate before he concurs in so harsh a censure. Tr.]

neille has laid his tragedy.* The second presents the history of the civil wars of Spain; and the third, and a part of the fourth, correspond with the poem which we analyzed in the last chapter; the conclusion of the fourth contains the old age and death of the hero.†

* Corneille borrowed his *Cid* partly from these romances, as he confesses in his preface, and partly from two Spanish tragi-comedies; one by Diamante, and the other by Guillen de Castro. By a strange historical error, the French poet has laid the scene at Seville, a city at that time a hundred leagues distant from the Christian frontier, and which remained under the Musulman dominion for two centuries afterwards. It was only in the old age of the *Cid*, that even Toledo and New Castile were recovered from the Moors. The French critics, who have passed their judgments on this masterpiece of Corneille, have never given themselves the trouble of forming an acquaintance with the hero of the tragedy. La Harpe supposes him to have lived in the fifteenth century. Voltaire, when he reproaches D. Ferdinand with not taking better measures for the defence of his capital, forgets that "at that period the King of Castile commanded a small territory, the inhabitants of which were perpetually under arms; and that the attacks of the Moors were not formal expeditions, but rapid and unexpected incursions, executed as soon as the project was formed, and which could only be met by the bravery of the soldiery, and not prevented by the policy of the prince.

† [In the original, the remainder of this chapter is occupied with prose translations into French, of the ballads of the *Cid* as given by Herder in his German version, and by occasional remarks on those extracts by M. de Sismondi. As Mr. Lockhart has favoured the public with metrical translations of several of the most interesting ballads of the *Cid*, calculated to

In the ballad of the young Cid*, Rodrigo is represented as riding with his father, Diego Laynez, to do homage to the king. Three hundred gentlemen accompany the father and son on this expedition :

All talking with each other thus along their way they pass'd,
But now they 've come to Burgos, and met the king at last ;
When they came near his nobles, a whisper through them ran :
" He rides amongst the gentry that slew the Count Lozan."

With very haughty gesture, Rodrigo rein'd his horse,
Right scornfully he shouted when he heard them so discourse—

give the reader a very pleasing idea of the singular character of the originals, it appeared advisable to the editor to substitute specimens, selected from Mr. Lockhart's translations, instead of attempting either to versify Herder, or the original Spanish ballads, in case he should be able to discover them. He had, indeed, resolved at one time to translate into English verse some portions of the ballads of the Cid, contained in the collection of Spanish *Romances*, published by M. Depping: *Samlung der besten alten Spanischen historischen Ritter und Maurischen Romanzen, &c. von Ch. Depping, Leipzig, 1817*; a collection of which M. de Sismondi would, doubtless, have availed himself, had it been published at the period when this work was written. The appearance of the *Ancient Spanish Ballads* induced the editor to abandon this design, under a full persuasion that Mr. Lockhart's versions were far superior to any thing which it would be in his power to produce. He has, therefore, made a selection from the eight ballads of the Cid, given by Mr. Lockhart, connecting the fragments, when necessary, by an explanatory text. The matter thus substituted occupies from p. 179 to p. 189. *Tr.*]

* [This ballad is the fifth in Escobar's collection. *Tr.*]

" If any of his kindred or vassals dare appear,
The man to give them answer on horse or foot is here."

No one, however, dares to notice the defiance, and Diego Laynez desires his son to kiss the good king's hand. Rodrigo's answer was a very short one :

" Had any other said it, his pains had well been paid ;
But thou, Sir, art my father—thy word must be obey'd :"
With that he sprang down lightly, before the king to kneel,
But as the knee was bending, outleap'd his blade of steel.

The king drew back in terror, when he saw the sword was bare ;
" Stand back, stand back, Rodrigo, in the devil's name beware ;
Your looks bespeak a creature of father Adam's mould,
But in your wild behaviour you 're like some lion bold."

When Rodrigo heard him say so, he leap'd into his seat,
And thence he made his answer with visage nothing sweet ;
" I 'd think it little honour to kiss a kingly palm,
And if my fathers kiss'd it, thereof ashamed I am."

When he these words had utter'd, he turn'd him from the gate,
His true three hundred gentles behind him follow'd straight ;
If with good gowns they came that day, with better arms they
went ;

And if their mules behind did stay, with horses they 're content.

Diego Laynez having been insulted by Count Gomez, the lord of Gormaz, the young Rodrigo challenges him to single combat, and slays him. In consequence of this affair, Ximena Gomez, the daughter of the Count, demands vengeance from the king; against the youthful Cid.* The mo-

* [This ballad is the sixth in Escobar. *Tr.*]

narch is disturbed in his court at Burgos by a loud clamour at his palace-porch, where he finds the fair Ximena Gomez kneeling and crying for vengeance :

Upon her neck disorder'd hung down the lady's hair,
And floods of tears were streaming upon her bosom fair ;
Sore wept she for her father the Count that had been slain,
Loud cursed she Rodrigo whose sword his blood did stain.

They turn'd to bold Rodrigo, I wot his cheek was red ;
With haughty wrath he listen'd to the words Ximena said—
“ Good king, I cry for justice ; now as my voice thou hearest,
So God befriend the children that in thy land thou rearest.

The king that doth not justice, hath forfeited his claim
Both to his kingly station, and to his kingly name ;
He should not sit at banquet, clad in the royal pall,
Nor should the nobles serve him on knees within the hall.

Good king, I am descended from barons bright of old
That with Castilian pennons Pelayo did uphold ;
But if my strain were lowly, as it is high and clear,
Thou still should'st prop the feeble, and the afflicted hear.

For thee, fierce homicide, draw^d draw thy sword once more,
And pierce the breast which wide I spread thy stroke before ;
Because I am a woman my life thou need'st not spare,
I am Ximena Gomez, my slaughter'd father's heir.

Since thou hast slain the knight who did our faith defend,
And still to shameful flight all the Almanzors send,
'Tis but a little matter that I confront thee so ;
Come, champion, slay his daughter, she needs must be thy foe.”

Ximena gazed upon him, but no reply could meet,
 His fingers held the bridle, he vaulted to his seat;
 She turn'd her to the nobles, I wot her cry was loud,
 But not a man durst follow; slow rode he through the crowd.

There is considerable doubt with regard to the authenticity of that portion of the Cid's history, which relates to his marriage with Ximena Gomez.* From the ballad of the Cid's courtship, however, it appears that the fair Ximena, having pardoned him for the murder of her father, asked him from the king in marriage :

To the good king Fernando, in Burgos where he lay,
 Came then Ximena Gomez, and thus to him did say;
 " I am Don Gomez' daughter, in Gormaz Count was he,
 Him slew Rodrigo of Bivar in battle valiantly.

Now I am come before you this day a boon to crave,
 And it is that I to husband may this Rodrigo have :
 Grant this, and I shall hold me a happy damosell ;
 Much honour^d shall I hold me, I shall be married well.

I know he's born for thriving, none like him in the land,
 I know that none in battle against his spear may stand ;
 Forgiveness is well pleasing in God our Saviour's view,
 And I forgive him freely, for that my sire he slew."

The king is highly pleased with Ximena's request, and instantly dispatches a messenger to Rodrigo, who, leaping upon Bavioca, speedily makes his appearance before the monarch. Fer-

* [See Southey's Chron. of the Cid, p. 6. Tr.]

nando informs him that Ximena has granted him pardon, and offered him her hand :

" I pray you be consenting, my gladness will be great,
You shall have lands in plenty to strengthen your estate."
" Lord King," Rodrigo answers, " in this and all beside,
Command and I 'll obey you, the girl shall be my bride."

But when the fair Ximena came forth to plight her hand,
Rodrigo, gazing on her, his face could not command :
He stood and blush'd before her ; thus at the last said he,
" I slew thy sire, Ximena, but not in villany.

In no disguise I slew him, man against man I stood,
There was some wrong between us, and I did shed his blood ;
I slew a man, I owe a man : fair lady, by God's grace,
An honour'd husband shalt thou have in thy dead father's place."

The ballad of the Cid's wedding contains many curious traits of national manners :

Within his hall of Burgos the king prepares his feast,
He makes his preparation for many a noble guest.
It is a joyful city, and it is a gallant day ;
'Tis the Campeador's wedding, and who will bide away ?

Layn Calvo, the Lord Bishop, he first comes forth the gate,
Behind him comes Ruy Diaz, in all his bridal state ;
The crowd makes way before them, as up the street they go ;
For the multitude of people their steps must needs be slow.

The king had taken order, that they should rear an arch
From house to house all over, in the way where they must
march,

They have hung it all with lances, and shields, and glittering
helms,

Brought by the Campeador from out the Moorish realms.

They have scatter'd olive-branches and rushes on the street,
 And ladies fling down garlands at the Campeador's feet ;
 With tapestry and broidery, their balconies between,
 To do his bridal honour their walls the burghers screen.

They lead the bulls before them, all cover'd o'er with trappings,
 The little boys pursue them with hootings and with clappings ;
 The fool with cap and bladder upon his ass goes prancing
 Amidst troops of captive maidens, with bells and cymbals
 dancing.

With antics and with fooleries, with shouting and with laughter,
 They fill the streets of Burgos, and the devil he comes after ;
 For the king had hired the horned fiend for sixteen maravedis,
 And there he goes with hoofs for toes to terrify the ladies.

Then comes the bride Ximena :—the king he holds her hand,
 And the queen, and all in fur and pall, the nobles of the land :
 All down the street, the ears of wheat are round Ximena flying,
 But the king lifts off her bosom sweet whatever there is lying.

Quoth Suero, when he saw it, (his thought you understand)
 " 'Tis a fine thing to be a king ; but heaven make me a hand ! "
 The king was very merry when he was told of this,
 And swore the bride ere evehtide should give the boy a kiss.

The king went always talking, but she held down her head,
 And seldom gave an answer to any thing he said.
 It was better to be silent among such a crowd of folk,
 Than utter words so meaningless as she did when she spoke.

The valour of Rodrigo was equalled by his
 humanity.* The ballad of *The Cid and the Leper*,
 exhibits this quality in a strong light.*

* [The Cid and the Leper is the twelfth romance in Escobar :
 and see Southey's Chron. of the Cid. p. 8. Tr.]

He has ta'en some twenty gentlemen along with him to go,
For he will pay that ancient vow he to St. James doth owe ;
'To Compostello, where the shrine doth by the altar stand,
'The good Rodrigo de Bivar is riding through the land.

Where'er he goes much alms he throws, to feeble folk and
poor,
Beside the way for him they pray, him blessings to procure ;
For God and Mary Mother, their heavenly grace to win,
His hand was ever bountiful ; great was his joy therein.

And there in middle of the path, a Leper did appear ;
In a deep slough the leper lay, none would to help come near ;
With a loud voice he thence did cry, " For God our Saviour's
sake,
From out this fearful jeopardy a Christian brother take."

When Roderic heard that piteous word, he from his horse came
down,
For all they said, no stay he made, that noble champion ;
He reach'd his hand to pluck him forth, of fear was no
account,
Then mounted on his steed of worth, and made the leper mount.

Behind him rode the leprous man ; when to their hostelry
They came he made him eat with him at table cheerfully ;
While all the rest from that poor guest with loathing shrunk
away,
'To his own bed the wretch he led, beside him there he lay.

All at the mid hour of the night, while good Rodrigo slept,
A breath came from the leprous man, it through his shoulders
crept ;
Right through the body, at the breast, pass'd forth that breathing
cold,
I wot he leap'd up with a start, in terrors manifold.

He groped for him in the bed, but him he could not find,
Through the dark chamber groped he with very anxious mind,
Loudly he lifted up his voice, with speed a lamp was brought,
Yet no where was the leper seen, though far and near they
sought.

He turn'd him to his chamber, God wot perplexed sore
With that which had befallen; when lo! his face before
There stood a man all clothed in vesture shining white,
Thus said the vision, "Sleepest thou, or wakest thou, Sir
knight?"

"I sleep not," quoth Rodrigo, "but tell me who art thou,
For, in the midst of darkness, much light is on thy brow?"
"I am the holy Lazarus, I come to speak with thee;
I am the same poor leper thou savedst for charity.

Not vain the trial, nor in vain thy victory hath been;
God favours thee, for that my pain thou didst relieve yestreen.
There shall be honour with thee in battle and in peace,
Success in all thy doings, and plentiful increase.

Strong enemies shall not prevail thy greatness to undo,
Thy name shall make men's cheeks full pale, Christians and
Moslems too;
A death of honour shalt thou die, such grace to thee is given,
Thy soul shall part victoriously, and be received in heaven."

When he these gracious words had said, the spirit vanish'd
quite;

Rodrigo rose and knelt him down—he knelt till morning light;
Unto the heavenly Father, and Mary Mother dear,
He made his prayer right humbly 'till dawn'd the morning clear.

The subject of the next ballad is *Bavieca*, the Cid's charger, whose fame has been celebrated in almost every romance which has recorded the exploits of his master. He is also mentioned in the Cid's will. "When ye bury Bavieca, dig deep; for shameful thing were it that he should be eat by curs who hath trampled down so much currish flesh of Moors." Rodrigo likewise directed that his dead body should be placed in armour, upon Bavieca, and so led to the church. After this ceremony had been performed, no man was again suffered to bestride the gallant charger. Bavieca survived his master about two years, having lived, according to the history, full forty years.

The king look'd on him kindly, as on a vassal true,
Then to the king Ruy Diaz spake, after reverence due :
" O king, the thing is shameful that any man beside
The liege lord of Castile himself should Bavieca ride.

For neither Spain nor Araby could another charger bring
So good as he, and certes the best befits my king ;
But that you may behold him and know him to the core,
I'll make him go as he was wont when his nostrils smelt the
Moor."

With that the Cid, clad as he was in mantle furr'd and wide,
On Bavieca vaulting, put the rowel in his side,
And up and down, and round and round, so fierce was his
career,
Stream'd like a pennon on the wind, Ruy Diaz' minivere.

And all that saw them prais'd them ; they lauded man and horse,
 As matched well, and rivalless for gallantry and force ;
 Ne'er had they look'd on horseman, might to this knight come
 near,
 Nor on other charger worthy of such a cavalier.

Thus to and fro a-rushing the fierce and furious steed
 He snapt in twain his hither rein—" God pity now the Cid !
 " God pity Diaz !" cried the lords—but when they look'd again,
 They saw Ruy Diaz ruling him with the fragment of his rein ;
 They saw him proudly ruling with gesture firm and calm,
 Like a true lord commanding, and obey'd as by a lamb.

And so he led him foaming and panting to the king,
 But, " No," said Don Alfonso, " it were a shameful thing
 That peerless Baviaca should ever be bestrid
 By any mortal but Bivar—mount, mount again, my Cid."

The *Excommunication of the Cid* is certainly
 of a very apocryphal character. The ballad,
 however, is an entertaining and curious one.

It was when from Spain across the main, the Cid was come to
 Rome,
 He chanced to see chairs four and three, beneath St. Peter's
 dome ;
 " Now tell, I pray, what chairs be they ? " " Seven kings do
 sit thereon,
 As well doth suit, all at the foot of the holy father's throne.

The pope he sitteth above them all, that they may kiss his toe,
 Below the keys the Flower-de-lys doth make a gallant show ;
 For his puissance the king of France next to the pope may sit,
 The rest more low, all in a row, as doth their station fit."

"Ha!" quoth the Cid, "now God forbid! it is a shame, I wis,
To see the Castle* planted beneath the Flower-de-lys.†
No harm I hope, good father pope, although I move thy chair;"
In pieces small he kick'd it all ('twas of the ivory fair.)

The pope's own seat, he from his feet, did kick it far away,
And the Spanish chair he planted upon its place that day;
Above them all he planted it, and laugh'd right bitterly,
Looks sour and bad I trow he had, as grim as grim might be.

Now when the pope was aware of this, (he was an angry man,)
His lips that night, with solemn rite, pronounced the awful ban;
The curse of God who died on rood, was on that sinner's head,
To Hell and woe man's soul must go, if once that curse be
said.

I wot when the Cid was aware of this, (a woeful man was he,)
At dawn of day he came to pray at the blessed father's knee;
"Absolve me, blessed father, have pity upon me,
Absolve my soul, and penance I for my sin will dree?"

"Who is this sinner," quoth the pope, "who at my foot doth
kneel?"

"I am Rodrigo Diaz, a poor baron of Castile—"
Much marvell'd all were in the hall, when that word they heard
him say,—

"Rise up, rise up," the pope he said, "I do thy guilt away:

I do thy guilt away," he said—"and my curse I blot it out;
God save Rodrigo Diaz, my Christian champion stout!
I trow if I had known thee, my grief it had been sore
To curse Ruy Diaz de Bivar, God's scourge upon the Moor."

I feel no regret in having so long dwelt upon
the times of the Cid. The brilliant reputation

* The arms of Castile.

† The arms of France.

of that hero, at the commencement of the Spanish monarchy, eclipses the glory of all who either preceded or followed him. Never was a reputation more completely national, and never, in the estimation of men, has there been a hero in Spain who has equalled Don Rodrigo. He occupies the debateable ground between history and romance, and the historian and the poet both assert their claims to him. The ballads which we have been examining are considered by Muller as authentic documents; while the poets of Spain have chosen them as the most brilliant subjects for their dramatic compositions. Diamante, an old poet, and subsequently Guillen de Castro, have borrowed from the early romances the plots of their tragedies of the Cid, both of which furnished a model to Corneille. Lope de Vega, in his *Almenas de Toro*, has dramatised the second period of the warrior's life, and the death of Sancho the Strong. Other writers have introduced other incidents of his life upon the stage. No hero, in short, has ever been so universally celebrated by his countrymen, nor is the fame of any individual so intimately connected as his, with all the poetry and the history of his native land.

CHAPTER XXV.

On Spanish Literature, during the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.

IN the formation of her language and her poetry Spain preceded Italy very considerably, though the progress which she afterwards made was so slow, that it was difficult to distinguish it. From the twelfth, until the end of the fifteenth century, when the spirit of Italian literature began to exert an influence in Spain, every production of value which proceeded from the pen of a Spaniard is anonymous and without date; and although, perhaps, in the songs and romances of these four centuries, the progress of the language and of the versification may be traced, yet in the ideas, in the sentiments, and in the images, there is so much similarity as to prevent us from dividing this portion of the literary history of Spain into separate epochs, and from assigning to each a distinctive character.

This uniformity in its literary history is likewise observable in the political history of Spain. During these four centuries, the Spanish charac-

ter was strengthened, confirmed, and developed, but not changed, by the national successes. There was the same chivalric bravery exercised in combats against the Moors, and exercised too without ferocity, and even with feelings of mutual esteem. There was the same high feeling of honour, and the same gallant bearing, nourished by rivalry with a nation as honourable and gallant as themselves; a nation with whom the knights of Spain had been often mingled, with whom they had sought an asylum, and with whom they had even served under the same banners; and lastly, there was the same independence amongst the nobles, the same national pride, the same patriotic attachments which were nourished by the division of Spain into separate kingdoms, and by the right of every vassal to make war upon the crown, provided he restored the fiefs which he held from it.

Spain, from the commencement of the eleventh century, was divided into five Christian kingdoms. It would be no easy task to present, in a few words, a picture of the various revolutions to which these states were exposed, though the dates of their progress and decline may be succinctly stated. The kingdom of Navarre, which was separated very early from the Moors by the Castilians, gradually extended itself on the side of Gascony. But, notwithstanding its frequent wars with the neighbouring states, notwithstanding

various accessions of territory, followed invariably by new partitions, Navarre remained within nearly the same limits until the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, who conquered it in 1512. The kingdom of Portugal, which was founded in 1090, by Alfonso VI. of Castile, as a provision for his son-in-law, extended itself during the twelfth century along the shores of the Atlantic, and at that period was comprised within the limits which, notwithstanding its long wars with Castile, it has since preserved. The kingdom of Leon, which formerly extended over Galicia and the Asturias, was the most ancient of all, and the true representative of the monarchy of the Visigoths. Having been founded by Pelagius and his descendants, it was to extend its frontiers that those heroic combats were fought, which, at the present day, fill the poetical history of Spain; and it was for the purpose of establishing the independence of this country, that the semi-fabulous hero Bernard del Carpio slew the Paladin Orlando at Roncevalles. The ancient house of the Visigoth kings became extinct in 1037, in the person of Bermudez III., and the kingdom of Leon then fell into the hands of Ferdinand the Great of Navarre, who united under his sceptre all the Christian states of Spain. On his death, he again severed Navarre and Castile in favour of one of his sons; and the kingdom of Leon, governed by the house of Bigorre, preserved an

independent but inglorious existence until the year 1230, when it was for the last time united to Castile by an intermarriage of the sovereigns.

In the east of Spain the resistance of the Christians had been less effectual. At the foot of the Pyrenees, around the towns of Jaca and Huesca, and in the little county of Soprarbia, the kingdom of Aragon took its rise. Soon afterwards, the expedition of Charlemagne against the Moors, laid the foundation of the county of Barcelona, then confined by the shores of the sea. From this feeble origin a powerful monarchy arose. Aragon, reunited to Navarre under Sancho the Great, was again severed from it in 1035; Saragossa was won from the Moors in 1112, and the victories of Alfonso the warlike, who was in vain defeated at Fraga, in 1134, tripled the extent of the monarchy. Three years after his death the state of Aragon was united to that of Barcelona, in 1137, by marriage; and a second Alfonso, in 1167, added Provence to the same sovereignty. James I., in 1238, conquered the kingdom of Valencia, and his successors united to it the Balearic Isles, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and lastly the kingdom of Naples. The monarchy of Aragon had arrived at its highest pitch of glory, when Ferdinand of Aragon, in 1469, intermarried with Isabella of Castile, and founded, by the union of the two crowns, that powerful monarchy, which under Charles V. em-

braced all Spain, and threatened the independence of the whole world.

But the most powerful of the monarchies of Christian Spain was Castile, which, as it inherited the conquests, the grandeur, and the glory of the other states of the Peninsula, demands a more particular examination. By the assistance of the kings of Oviedo and Leon, part of New-Castile succeeded in throwing off the Musulman yoke, though, until the year 1028, the sovereign only bore the title of Count. Sancho III. of Navarre, by his marriage with the heiress of Castile, united this sovereignty to his other states ; from which it was again separated in 1035, in favour of Ferdinand the Great, who first assumed the title of King of Castile. The victories of that monarch, and of his son Sancho the Strong, rescued all Old Castile from the Moorish yoke. New Castile was at that period a powerful Musulman kingdom, the capital of which was Toledo. It was at the court of one of the kings of Toledo, that Alfonso VI., when pursued by his brother, sought an asylum. He afterwards proceeded, in 1072, with the assistance of the Moorish monarch, to recover the inheritance of Sancho the Strong. Deaf to the voice of gratitude, Alfonso VI. did not hesitate to despoil Hiaia, the son of his benefactor, of his dominions. In 1085, he conquered Toledo and New Castile. The Moors, who, when they

arrived in Spain, were better soldiers than the Goths, very quickly lost this advantage. The use of baths, and other luxuries and delicacies, to which they had been unaccustomed, soon enervated them. They were vanquished in every combat where they were not infinitely superior in numbers ; and they frequently submitted to become the vassals of a few knights, who established themselves amongst them. Alfonso VI. in his dominions, the extent of which he had almost doubled, counted more than two millions of Musulman subjects, to whom he was engaged by the most solemn oaths to preserve their laws, their worship, and all their privileges. The Christians, who, though inferior in number, had obtained the ascendancy over this still powerful people, were not united amongst themselves. An inveterate jealousy separated the conquerors, who called themselves *Montañes*, on account of their residence in the mountains, from the Moçarabians, or freedmen of the Moors. Religion, which ought to have united them, was a new source of dispute and contention. The Christians who were found in New Castile when it was delivered from the dominion of the Moors, had preserved in their churches a particular rite in the celebration of divine service, which was designated by the name of the Moçarabian ceremony. The conquerors wished to establish the Ambrosian ceremony; and the choice between the two forms of worship

was referred to the judgment of God, in declaring which the policy of the monarch, and not the jealousy of the priests, was fortunately the principal instrument. The two rituals were cast into the fire, and instead of the single miracle which was expected, the spectators were astonished with two ; both the rituals were taken out of the flames unhurt. Recourse was now had to the judicial combat, and two warriors fought for the two forms of worship, without either of them obtaining the advantage. Thus the two rituals were declared of equal authority ; mutual toleration was sanctioned by the double miracle ; and, the Moçarabian ceremony is still practised in some of the churches of Toledo.

The Musulman princes of Andalusia, terrified by the conquests of the Christians, called in to their assistance the Emperor of Morocco, You-souf, the son of Teschfin the Morabite, who, with a band of fresh fanatics, from the deserts of Africa, restored the balance of the war, and, giving strength and courage to the Arabians of Spain, arrested the progress of the Castilians. In vain did Alfonso VI. attempt to separate the Spanish from the African Moors, even marrying the daughter of the king of Seville, by way of strengthening his alliance. He was the victim of his own policy ; and being defeated in several great battles, he with difficulty preserved his former conquests. From this time it became

apparent that the Spaniards, when by their admixture with the Moors they acquired a knowledge of their arts and sciences, had likewise contracted their oriental effeminacy. A century and a half was passed in disputes with the Moors of Estramadura, without any important conquest being made; whilst, on the other side, the Castilians in 1101 or 1102 evacuated the kingdom of Valencia, where they were unable to maintain themselves after the death of the Cid. The talents and the bravery of Alfonso VIII., and of Alfonso IX., and their brilliant victories at Jaen in 1157, and at Tolosa in 1212, scarcely compensated for their disastrous minorities, and for the evils of the civil wars in which they engaged. Ultimately, however, after two or three generations, the Christians again assumed all their superiority over the Moors. Led on by Ferdinand III. or St. Ferdinand as he was called, they subdued Cordova, in 1236, and Seville in 1248, and achieved, towards the latter end of the thirteenth century, the conquest of Estramadura and of Andalusia. The long reign of Alfonso X. was much disturbed by civil commotions. That monarch during the latter part of the thirteenth century was successively engaged in war with his brothers and his children, and was perpetually at variance with his subjects, whom he endeavoured to deprive of their privileges. The reigns of Ferdinand IV. and of Alfonso XI. (1295-1350) commenced with two

long minorities, and fresh civil wars were the consequence. During the last ten years of this period the efforts of the King of Morocco to maintain the Musulmans in Spain revived, notwithstanding his celebrated defeat at Tarifa, the apprehensions of the Christians. In the midst of these internal disorders and foreign invasions, the royal authority was shaken. The ferocious Peter I. surnamed the Cruel, attempted to re-establish his power by a system of severity; but his cruelties drove his brother and his subjects into rebellion, and he perished at the battle of Montiel, in 1369. The crown of Castile now devolved upon a bastard branch. Several weak and feeble princes, Henry III. John II. and Henry IV. now succeeded, who abandoned themselves to the government of their favourites; and the last of these sovereigns was, in the year 1465, deposed by his subjects, after having rendered himself contemptible in the eyes of all Europe. During the whole of this century Grenada was the home of luxury, of art, and of gallantry. Its population was prodigious; and the land was kept in a state of the highest cultivation. Love, festivals, and games, were the occupation of the Moorish nobles. No entertainment was complete unless attended with some illustrious achievement of arms; and the knights of Castile, who guarded the frontiers, gladly presented themselves at every courtly festival, to shed their blood in the

tourney, and to dispute in serious combat the prize of valour. The civil wars of Castile and those of Grenada, between the Zegris and the Abencerrages, prevented every project of extended conquest; but without the carnage consequent upon a long war, and even without destroying the good understanding of the neighbouring states, the field of battle was always open to the two nations, and an opportunity was thus afforded to their valiant youth to exercise themselves in arms. A hundred and fifty years had now elapsed since the battle of Tarifa, the latest period when the power of the Musulmans threatened the existence of Castile, when Isabella, who had ascended the throne in 1474, achieved in 1492 the conquest of Grenada; a project suggested to her by her confessor, and which she pursued with the blind zeal of a woman, but with the talents and courage of a man. The fall of this great city terminated the struggle which had endured for nearly eight centuries between the Moors and the Christians, and many millions of Musulmans became subjects of Castile. The population of the province of Grenada had been augmented by refugees from all the Moorish states of Spain, which had yielded to the Christians two centuries and a half before the fall of Grenada.

Previously to giving an account of the writers whom Castile produced during that period, I have thought it expedient thus to present to the

reader the principal events which occurred during a very considerable portion of the history of that country, and to pursue the progress of those conquests, from north to south, which flattered the national pride by daily successes, trained the inhabitants to the use of arms, and secured to the brave such brilliant and immediate rewards.

The first distinguished author of the fourteenth century, is the Prince Don Juan Manuel, a cadet of the royal family, who traced his descent up to Saint Ferdinand. In him we remark that union of letters and of arms which reflected such glory upon Spain, and by which the reign of Charles V. was rendered so illustrious. He served Alfonso XI., a prince of jealous feelings, and exceedingly difficult to please, with great fidelity, and was by him named governor (*adelantado mayor*) of the Moorish frontiers. For twenty years he carried on a successful war against the Moors of Grenada, and died in 1362. His principal composition is entitled *Count Lucanor*, and is, it may be said, the first prose work in the Castilian language, as was the *Decameron*, which appeared about the same time, in the Italian. *Count Lucanor*, like the *Decameron*, is a collection of Novels, but in every other respect the works are entirely different. *Lucanor* is the production of a statesman, who wishes to instruct a grave and serious nation in lessons of policy and morality, in the shape of apologues. The Deca-

meron is the lively offspring of a man of taste, but of dissipated manners, whose object is rather to please than to instruct. Prince Juan Manuel places his hero, Count Lucanor, in very difficult circumstances, with regard both to morals and to politics. The Count asks the advice of his friend and Minister Patronio, who answers him with a little tale, which is related with much grace and simplicity, and applied with wit and ingenuity. There are forty-nine of these tales, and the moral of each is contained in two little verses, less remarkable for their poetical merit than for their precision and good sense. The first of these novels is translated below. When we are engaged in discussing the merits of productions almost entirely unknown, it is proper to present the reader rather with examples than with opinions.

One day Count Lucanor thus bespoke his counsellor Patronio. "Patronio, thou knowest that I am a great hunter, and that I have hunted more than any man before; and that I have invented and added to the hoods and jesses of my falcons certain contrivances which are entirely new. Now they who are maliciously inclined towards me speak of me in derision. They praise the Cid Ruy Diaz or Count Fernando Gonzales, for the battles they have fought, or the holy and blessed king D. Ferdinand, for all the conquests which he achieved; but they praise me for having accomplished a great thing in bringing to

perfection the hoods and jesses of my falcons. Now, as such praise is rather an insult than an honour, I pray thee counsel me how I may avoid this irony upon a subject which, after all, is praiseworthy enough." "My Lord Count," said Patronio, "that you may know how to conduct yourself in this case, I will relate to you what happened to a Moor who was king of Cordova." The Count bade him proceed, and then Patronio thus spoke :

"There was once a Moorish king of Cordova, whose name was Al-Haquem. He governed his kingdom with tolerable discretion, but he did not exert himself to accomplish any great and honourable exploits, as kings are in duty bound. It is not enough in them barely to preserve their dominions. They who would acquire a noble fame, should so act as to enlarge their territories without injustice, and thus gain the applause of their subjects during their life, and at their death leave lasting monuments of their great achievements. But the king of whom we are speaking cared nothing about all this ; he thought only of eating, and amusing himself, and spending his time idly in his palace. Now it happened one day that he was listening to the music of an instrument of which the Moors are very fond, and which they call albogon. He observed that it did not sound so well as he could contrive to make it; so he took the albogon,

and made a hole underneath opposite the others. The effect of this was that the albogon yielded a much finer note than before. This was a very clever invention, but not exactly suited to a royal personage. The people in derision pretended to praise it. It passed into a proverb, and, when speaking of any useless improvement, they say: 'It is worthy of king Al-Haquem himself.' This saying was so often repeated, that it came at last to the ears of the king, who enquired its meaning, and in spite of the silence of those whom he questioned, he insisted so pertinaciously on an answer, that they were obliged to explain it to him. When he knew this, the king grieved sorely, as, after all, he was in truth a very good king. He inflicted no punishment upon those who had thus spoken of him, but he made a resolution in his own heart to invent some other improvement which should compel the people to praise him in good earnest. He set his people to work to finish the great mosque of Cordova. He supplied every deficiency, and finally completed it, and made it the most beautiful, noble, and exquisite of all the Moorish mosques in Spain. Praise be to the Lord, it is at this day a church, and is called St. Mary's. It was dedicated by that holy Saint, King Ferdinand, after he had taken Cordova from the Moors. When the king had finished it, he said, that if his improvements on the albogon had hitherto exposed him to

derision, he expected that for the future he should be applauded for the completion of the mosque of Cordova. The proverb was in fact changed, and even unto this day, when the Moors speak of an addition superior to the object to which it is attached, they say: King Al-Haquem has mended it."

It is evident that Patronio did not give himself much trouble in disguising his instructions. The apologue is little more than a repetition of Lucanor's own story. The counsel is sensible and just enough, but it must be confessed that it does not display much wit. In general we must not look to the writers of the fourteenth century for quickness, precision, wit, and polish. Those qualities are only produced in an age of high civilization, and by the collision of intellect. The education which was bestowed in castles, and the severe discipline of the feudal system, acted upon the imagination rather than upon the judgment. The writers of the middle ages are most valuable when they give us pictures of themselves; for human nature, which in every state is worthy of observation, is still more so when it has not cast off its native simplicity. Of the various compositions of those writers, their poetry is the most remarkable; for there the imagination supplies the deficiencies of knowledge, and depth of feeling the want of variety. In matters of thought, however, their goal has been

our starting-place, and we can only look for information from their writings, so far as regards them, and not ourselves.

Prince Juan Manuel was likewise the author of some didactic pieces on the duties of a knight, which have not come down to us. Some of his romances are, however, preserved; they are written with a simplicity which adds to the value of compositions in themselves tender and touching. The Spaniards had not yet renounced that natural style of expression, which at once proceeds from and affects the heart. They still faithfully preserved it in their romances, though they had already begun to abandon it in their lyrical poetry. Some amatory effusions by Prince Juan Manuel have survived, which bear evident marks of this refinement.

A short time after Prince Juan, flourished Pedro Lopez de Ayala, who was born in Murcia, in 1332, and died in 1407, after having filled the offices of Grand Chamberlain, and Grand Chancellor of Castile. His poems, which were promised to the public by Sanchez, have, I believe, never yet been printed. They would possess, in a greater degree than the poems of Prince Juan, that interest which results from the exhibition of strong political passions, and from the developement of a character, which would seem to forebode to the individual a stormy and troubled life. Ayala, who had previously been in the service of Peter

the Cruel, afterwards attached himself to the party of his brother, Henry de Transtamare, and justified the revolt of the Castilians by his writings, as he had aided it with his arms. In his chronicle of the four kings under whom he had lived, Peter, Henry II., John I., and Henry III. he paints in the blackest colours the ferocity of the first, and it is chiefly upon his authority that the accusations rest which have cast such infamy upon the memory of this ancient tyrant of Spain. Ayala, who first translated Livy into the Castilian, was the first likewise to lead the way in adapting the narrative style of the ancients to modern history. Amongst his poems, the most celebrated is his *Rimado de palacio*, which was written in prison, for the express purpose of rendering Peter odious to his subjects, and of conciliating their good will towards his brother. He fought by the side of Henry at the battle of Naxera, and together with Duguesclin was taken prisoner by the English, the allies of Peter the Cruel, on the third of April, 1367. He was afterwards carried to England, and he has in his poems drawn a terrible picture of the gloomy prison in which he was confined, the wounds under which he was suffering, and the chains with which he was loaded. His *Rimado de palacio*, contains sixteen hundred and nineteen *coplas* or stanzas, varying in the metre and the number of their lines. Politics, morals, and

religion, are alternately the subjects of Lopez de Ayala's muse; and Sanchez assures us, that his writings are replete with profound learning, knowledge of the world, and high religious feelings. He passes some severe censures on the great statesmen, as well as on the ecclesiastics of his day; but the great corruption of both classes during the fourteenth century justifies the bitterness of his satire. Lopez de Ayala, after his release, became one of the counsellors of Henry, and his ambassador to France; but he was again taken prisoner in the year 1385, at the battle of Aljubarrota, which was fought against the Portuguese. This double captivity made him feel most sensibly all the grievances attached to the loss of liberty, and tinctured his poetry with a solemnity of imagery and a melancholy tone of sentiment, which give it an elevated character. Yet it is probable, that the greater part of the poems, which he has dated from his prison, were in fact composed when he had recovered his liberty, and after he had been raised by John I. to the highest dignities in the kingdom. At the period when Ayala wrote, the other poets of Spain composed little else than amatory verses; but in all his numerous productions there is scarcely a single verse to be found, which touches upon a profane passion. Many of them, it is true, are filled with that divine love which borrows the language of human passion, and are

evidently the production of a man devoted to mysticism.*

It is to a contemporary of Prince Juan that we owe the *Amadis of Gaul*, the best and most celebrated of the romances of chivalry. Vasco Lobeira, whom the Spaniards acknowledge to be the author, was a Portuguese, who was born in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and died in the year 1325. He wrote the four first books of the *Amadis* in Spanish; but for some unexplained reason his work did not become generally known until the middle of the fourteenth century. This celebrated romance was certainly an imitation of the French romances of chivalry, which, in the preceding century, had acquired so high a reputation throughout Europe, and had produced such important effects on its literature. The French have even some pretensions to the first invention of the *Amadis*. But whatever may be the truth with regard to that fact, the work became naturalized in Spain by the avidity with which it was read by all classes, the enthusiasm it excited, and the powerful influence

* I have perused the poems of the arch-priest of Hita, written about the year 1343, which Sanchez has published in his fourth volume of the *Coleccion de Poesias Castellanas*. They may perhaps afford some idea of the *Rimado de Palacio*, as they are written in irregular stanzas, and contain all the politics and morality of the author, and of the age. They are none of them, however, sufficiently interesting to merit insertion in this work.

which it exerted over the taste of the Castilians. The perpetual errors in geography and history escaped the attention of readers, who were utter strangers to those branches of knowledge. The diffuse and yet stiff style of the narrative, instead of being a reproach, was in accordance with the manners of the age. It seemed to present a stronger picture of those Gothic and chivalric virtues which the Moorish wars still cherished in Spain, and which the Castilians delighted to attribute to their ancestors in a greater degree than the truth warranted. The brilliant fairy mythology of the East, with which a commerce with the Arabians had rendered the Spaniards acquainted, assumed fresh charms in this romance, and captivated the imagination. Love, also, was painted with an excess of devotion and of voluptuous tenderness, which affected the people of the south much more powerfully than the same sentiments would have influenced the French. The passion of love thus represented was so submissive, so constant, and so religious, that it almost seemed a virtue to entertain it; and yet the author has denied to his heroes none of its privileges. He has effectually captivated inflammable imaginations, by confounding the allurements of voluptuousness with the duties of chivalry.

The celebrity of the *Amadis de Gaul*, and its numerous imitations, together with the frequent

translations of all the French romances of chivalry, have given the national poetry of Spain a very animated and chivalric character. The spirit of these popular works passed to the romances, which were equally popular, and it is to the fourteenth century that we owe those poetical tales for which the Spaniards are so eminently distinguished. In most of these romances, we may remark a touching simplicity of expression, a truth of painting, and an exquisite sensibility, which invest them with the highest charms.* Some of them are still more distinguished by the

* The *Romancero general*, collected by Pedro de Florez, and printed at Madrid in 1614, in quarto, was probably only a bookseller's speculation. It is a confused collection of all the popular romances, displaying neither taste nor critical acumen. It is a painful task to wade through this immense collection. It is divided into thirteen parts, which, instead of distinguishing the contents, render the whole more confused. But the reader will be rewarded for his labour, should he have the courage to undergo it. There are many romances as simple and beautiful as the following, in which we recognize in an European language the imagination and melancholy sentiments of the Arabians, from whom the Spaniards borrowed many of their popular songs.

Fonte frida, fonte frida,
 Fonte frida y con amor,
 Do todas las avezicas
 Van tomar consolacion,
 Sino es la tortolica
 Que esta biuda y con dolor ;

powers of invention which they display. When this is the case, they form little chivalric romances, the effect of which is lively and impressive in proportion to the brevity of the poem. The author strikes at once into the middle of his subject, and thus produces a powerful effect upon the imagination, and avoids long and useless intro-

Por ay fuera a passar -
El traydor del ruy señor,
Las palabras que el dezia
Llenas son de traycion :
Si tu quisisses señora
Yo seria tu servidor ;
Vete de ay enemigo
Malo falso enganador,
Que ni poso en ramo verde
Ni en prado que tenga flor,
Que si el agua hallo clara
Turbia la bevio yo,
Que no quiero aver marido
Porque hijos no aya no,
No quiero plazer con ellos
Ni menos consolacion ;
Dexame triste enemigo
Malo falso, mal traydor,
Que no quiero ser tu amiga
Ni casar contigo no.

It is difficult to explain in what consists the charm of this little romance, unless it be in the air of truth and the absence of all design for which it is so remarkable. It was certainly highly appreciated by the Spaniards, and the romance has been annotated upon by Tapia.

ductions. The weakest memory was able to retain these romances. They were sung by the soldiers on their march, by the rustics in their daily labours, and by the women during their domestic occupations. The knowledge of their ancient history and of chivalry was in this manner diffused throughout the whole nation. Few individuals were able to read, or indeed had any kind of literary instruction; and yet it would have been difficult to have found amongst them one who was not acquainted with the brilliant adventures of Bernard de Carpio, of the Cid, of Don Gayferos, of Calaynos the Moor, and of all the knights of the time of Amadis, or of the court of Charlemagne. The people, no doubt, derived very little real instruction from indulging in these pursuits of the imagination. History was confounded in their mind with romance, and the same credit was given to probable events, and to marvellous adventures. But this universal acquaintance with the exploits of chivalry, and this deep interest in characters of the noblest and most elevated cast, excited a national feeling of a singularly poetical nature. The Moors, who were, in almost every village, intermingled with the Christians, were still more sensible than the latter to the charm of these romances, and still more attached to the love of music. Even at the present day they can forget their labours, their griefs, and their fears, to abandon them-

selves wholly to the pleasures of song. They are probably the authors of many of the Castilian romances, and others have, perhaps, been composed for their amusement. The Moorish heroes were certainly as conspicuous in those works as the Christians; and the admiration which the writers endeavoured to excite for the "Knights of Granada—gentlemen, although Moors:" *Caballeros Granadinos*—*aunque Moros hijos d'algo*: strengthened the ties between the two nations, and by cherishing those benevolent feelings, which their priests in vain attempted to destroy, inspired them with mutual affection and esteem.*

Bernard del Carpio, who has been celebrated

* The Spanish devotees were at one period much scandalized at the number of their poets who had sung the loves and exploits of the infidels. In the *Romancero general* there is a romance against this pretended impiety.

Renegaron a su ley
 Los romancistes de España;
 Y ofrecieron a Mahoma
 Los primicios de sus gracias.

In the same place we meet with a more liberal poet, who is unwilling that the Spaniards should abandon this portion of their national glory.

Si es español don Rodrigo
 Español fue el fuerte Audalla

Si una gallarda española
 Quiere baylar, doña Juana,

in so many romances and tragedies, belonged equally to both nations. The romantic and often fabulous adventures of this Castilian Hercules, are peculiarly suited to poetry. In these romances we have an account of his parentage, being the offspring of a secret marriage between Don Sancho Diaz, Count of Saldaña, and Ximena, the sister of Alfonso the Chaste, a marriage which that king never pardoned; of the long and wretched captivity of the Count of Saldaña, whom Alfonso threw into the dungeons of the Castle of Luna, after having deprived him of his eyes; of the prodigious strength and prowess by which Bernard, who had been brought up under another name, proved himself worthy of the royal stock from which he sprang; of his efforts to obtain his father's liberty, which Alfonso had promised him as the reward of his labours, and which he afterwards refused; of that king's last treacherous act, when, after all the conquests of Bernard had been surrendered to him as the ransom of the Count of Saldaña, he strangled the unfortunate old man, and delivered only his breathless body to his son; of the first alliance of Bernard with the Moors to

Las Zambras tambien lo son
Pues es España Granada;
Y entienda el misero pobre
Que son blazones de España
Ganados a fuego y sangre
No (como el dize) prestadas.

avenge himself; of his second alliance with them in order to defend the independence of Spain against Charlemagne, and of his victory over Orlando at Roncevalles. Every incident of this ancient hero's life was sung with transport by the Castilians and the Moors.

Another series of these romances relate to a more modern period of history, and comprise the wars between the Zegrís and Abencerrages of Grenada. Every joust, every combat, and every intrigue which took place in the court of the later Moorish kings was recited by the Castilians, and all the old romances are again met with in the chivalric history of these civil conflicts.

The extreme simplicity of these romances, which are not relieved by a single ornament, would seem to render them peculiarly easy of translation. There is, however, a singular charm in the monotonous harmony of the Spanish *redondilha*, in which the short lines of four trochees each follow one another with great sweetness, as well as in that imperfect but reiterated rhyme with which the second line in each stanza of these romances terminates. These rhymes, which preserve the image by the repetition of the same sound, produce a general impression in unison with the subject. Thus the assonants are generally spirited and sounding in martial songs, and

sweet and melancholy in the amatory and elegiac romances. I shall attempt, however, to give the reader an idea of two of these romances. The first is merely a relation of a simple fact in the history of Spain, which is told with all the melancholy circumstances attending it. The subject is the destitute condition of Roderic, the last king of the Goths, after his defeat. The great battle of Xeres, or of the Guadaleta, which, in the year 711, opened Spain to the Musulmans, is deeply impressed upon the memory of all the Castilians, who claim, even at the present day, to be the heirs of the glory of the Goths, and who delight in tracing back their nobility and their departed power to these semi-fabulous times.

THE LAMENTATION OF DON RODERIC.

* The hosts of Don Rodrigo were scattered in dismay,
When lost was the eighth battle, nor heart nor hope had they ;
He, when he saw that field was lost, and all his hope was flown,
He turned him from his flying host, and took his way alone.

* Las huestes de don Rodrigo
Desmayavan y huyan,
Quando en la octava batalla
Sus enemigos vencian.

Rodrigo dexa sus tierras
Y del real se salia,
Solo va el desventurado
Que non lleva compañía.

His horse was bleeding, blind, and lame—he could no farther go ;
 Dismounted without path or aim, the king stepped to and fro :
 It was a sight of pity to look on Roderic,
 For sore athirst and hungry, he stagger'd faint and sick.

All stain'd and strew'd with dust and blood, like to some
 smouldering brand

Pluck'd from the flame Rodrigo shew'd ; his sword was in his
 hand :

But it was hack'd into a saw of dark and purple tint ;
 His jewell'd mail had many a flaw, his helmet many a dint.

He climb'd unto a hill-top, the highest he could see ;
 Thence all about of that wide route, his last long look took he ;

El cavallo de cansado
 Ya mudar no se podia,
 Camina por donde quiere
 Que no le estorva la via.

El rey va tan desmayado
 Que sentido no tenia,
 Muerto va de sed y hambre
 Que de vello era manzilla.

Y va tan tinto ^{de} de sangre
 Que una braza parecia ;
 Las armas lleva abolladas
 Que eran de gran pedreria.

La espada lleva hecha sierra
 De los golpes que tenia,
 El almete de abollado
 En la cabeça se hundia.

La cara llevaba hinchada
 Del trabajo que sufria ;
 Subiose en cima de un cerro
 El mas alto que veyá.

He saw his royal banners, where they lay drench'd and torn ;
He heard the cry of victory, the Arabs' shout of scorn.

He look'd for the brave captains that had led the hosts of Spain,
But all were fled, except the dead,—and who could count the
slain ?

Where'er his eye could wander all bloody was the plain ;
And while thus he said the tears he shed run down his cheeks
like rain.

Last night I was the King of Spain—to-day no king am I :
Last night fair castles held my train, to-night where shall I lie ?
Last night a hundred pages did serve me on the knee,
To-night not one I call my own ; not one pertains to me.

Dende alli mira su gente
Como yva de vencida,
Dalli mira sus vanderas
Y estandartes que tenia.

Como estan todos pisados
Que la tierra los cubria.
Mira por los capitanes
Que ninguno parecia.

Mira el campo tinto en sangre
La qual arroyos corria,
El triste de ver aquesto
Gran manzilla en si tenia.

Llorando de los sus ojos
Desta manera dezia :
Ayer era rey d' España
Oy no lo soy de una villa.

Ayer villas y castillos
Oy ninguno posseya ;
Ayer tenia criados
Y gente que me servia.

O luckless, luckless was the hour, and cursed was the day
 When I was born to have the power of this great seignory!
 Unhappy me, that I should see the sun go down to-night!
 O death, why now so slow art thou, why fearest thou to smite?*

I shall confine myself to giving a few extracts only from another and much longer romance; that of the *Count Alarcos*, upon which a German writer of the present day has founded a tragedy. It commences with a touching description of the grief of the Princess Soliza, the royal Infanta, who has been secretly betrothed to the Count Alarcos, and abandoned by him. The Infanta remains in retreat, and beholds with sorrow the flower of her days consuming away in solitude,

Oy no tengo una almena
 Que pueda dezir que es mia.
 Desdichada fue la hora
 Desdichado fue aquel dia.

En que naci y heredé
 La tan grande señoria,
 Pues lo avia de perder
 Todo junto y en un dia.

O muerte porque no vienes
 Y llevas esta alma mia
 De aqueste cuerpo mezquino
 Puez se te agradeceria?

* [The spirited translation in the text is borrowed from Mr. Lockhart's *Ancient Spanish Ballads*. The Lamentation of Don Roderic is mentioned in the second part of *Don Quixote*, in the chapter of the puppet-show. *Tr.*]

for the Count is married to another lady, by whom he has several children. After concealing her grief for a long time, the Princess reveals the cause of her unhappiness to her father. The king is exceedingly indignant, and thinks his honour so deeply wounded, that the death of the Count's wife can alone wipe out the stain. He summons the Count to his presence, and treats him with mingled courtesy and dignity, demanding from him at the same time on his obedience as a subject, that his Countess shall be put to death. The marriage, in his eyes, is illegal; the Countess had usurped his daughter's rights, and brought dishonour on the royal house. Alarcos, who had bound himself by prior vows to the Princess Soliza, considers it his duty as a man of honour and a loyal vassal, to grant the satisfaction which the king demands. He, therefore, promises to execute the royal orders, and proceeds in search of the Countess :

- * In sorrow he departed, dejectedly he rode
The weary journey from that place, unto his own abode;
He grieved for^d his fair Countess, dear as his life was she;
Sore grieved he for that lady and for his children three.

* Llorando se parte el Conde
Llorando sin alegria,
Llorando a la Condesa
Que mas que a si la queria.
Lloraba tambien el Conde

The one was yet an infant upon its mother's breast,
 For though it had three nurses, it liked her milk the best.
 The others were young children that had but little wit,
 Hanging about their mother's knee while nursing she did sit.

The Countess meets her husband with her accustomed tenderness, but vainly endeavours to discover the cause of the grief which she observes in his countenance. Alarcos, however, sits down at table with his family.

The children to his side were led, he loved to have them so,
 Then on the board he laid his head, and out his tears did flow ;—
 "I fain would sleep—I fain would sleep," the Count Alarcos
 said ;—

Alas! be sure that sleep was none that night within their bed.*

Por tres hijos que tenia,
 El uno era de teta,
 Que la Condesa lo cria,
 Que no queria mamar
 De tres amas que tenia
 Si no era de su madre.

[The whole ballad of the Count Alarcos and the Infanta Soliza is translated by Mr. Lockhart, p. 202. From his version the extracts in the text are borrowed. *Tr.*]

Sentose el Conde a la mesa
 No cenava ni podia ;
 Con sus hijos al costado.
 Que muy mucho los queria.
 Echo se sobre los hombros,
 Hizo como se dormia :
 De lagrimas de sus ojos
 Teda la mesa cubria.

The apparent fatigue of the Count induces the Countess to accompany him herself to his chamber; but no sooner are they alone, than the Count fastens the door. He then informs the lady that the King has discovered their union, which he considers injurious to his honour, and that he has promised the Princess Soliza to avenge her. At last he informs the Countess that she must prepare to die before daybreak :

“ It may not be, mine oath is strong ; ere dawn of day you die.” *

She begs, in her infant's name, that he will spare her ; but the Count bids her for the last time to press to her heart the child which was clinging to her bosom :

“ Kiss him that lies upon thy breast, the rest thou may'st not see.” †

She then submits to her fate, and only asks time to repeat her *Ave Maria*. . This the Count presses her to do with speed, and she throws herself upon her knees and prays briefly but fer-

* De morir aveis, Condesa,
Antes que amanesca el dia.

Abrazad este chiquito
Que aquesto es el que os perdia,
Pesa me de os, Condesa,
Quanto pesar me podia.

vently. She still begs a further respite, that her infant may take the last nourishment it will ever receive from her bosom ; but the Count will not allow her to waken the child. The unfortunate lady then pardons her husband, but predicts to him that ere thirty days shall pass, the King, the Princess, and himself, must appear before the judgment-seat of God. The Count at last strangles her with a handkerchief which he throws round her neck. The prophecy is subsequently accomplished. On the twelfth day after the murder, the Princess dies suddenly. On the twentieth the King follows her ; and on the thirtieth the Count himself is called away.

This romance will probably recall to our recollection some of our common ballads, in which we find the same natural and simple sentiments, together with the same improbability of situation. Thus in some of the tales of our infancy, as in *Blue-Beard* for instance, the atrocious conduct of the hero is related with the utmost simplicity, as if it were a matter of very common occurrence, and the greatest interest is excited by an incident which appears to be impossible. In fact, the Spanish romances, like our popular tales and ballads, had their obscure birth amongst the people. We remark in them the same infantine imagination which appears to be rich in proportion to the ignorance of the world which it displays, and which heeds not the

boundaries of the possible or of the probable, provided it can express the true sentiments of the heart. In poetry, as well as in religion, faith may be said to be of the highest importance. To feel deeply we must believe without examining. The most poetical ages are those in which credit is given to the most incoherent fictions. Amongst the Spaniards, the credulous imagination of the earlier ages has been preserved in greater purity than amongst us. They never enquire from their poets, their romance writers, or their dramatists, whether their incidents are possible. It is sufficient that they are affected by the images and feelings which are presented to them. The judgment is altogether neglected. Some literary men in Germany and even in France, who prefer poetry to every other intellectual pursuit, have exerted themselves to revive this credulity, so favourable to the power of the imagination. They seize upon some incoherent or improbable subject, by which they flatter themselves they shall render their work more poetical; and they thus lose the advantages of their own age, without reaping the benefits of another. Ignorance must be natural and not assumed, before we can pardon it and join in its prejudices. If a knight of the fourteenth century were to relate to us the story of the Count Alarcos, or of Blue-Beard, we might give him our serious attention; but we

could only be expected to smile if it were told us by one of our contemporaries.

During the commotions which incessantly agitated the reigns of the descendants of Henry de Transtamare, some men of high character appeared amongst the proud nobility of Castile. They directed the Cortes, they placed bounds to the royal authority, and even threatened to depose the sovereigns. But while their minds appeared to be thus engrossed with politics and ambition, we behold with surprise the same individuals passionately attached to poetry, and often, in the midst of factions and carnage, devoted to the interests of literature. The reign of John II. (1407-1454,) during which Castile lost all its power and nearly all its consideration abroad, is one of the most brilliant epochs of Castilian poetry. That feeble monarch, perpetually menaced with the subversion of his throne, still preserved some credit in the midst of the continual revolutions which harassed him, by his taste for poetry, and by attaching to him many of the first men of his kingdom, who, being themselves distinguished poets, gladly crowded to his literary court.

One of the first of these poetical courtiers was the Marquis Henry de Villena, who, on the paternal side, was descended from the kings of Aragon, and on the maternal, from the kings of Castile. His reputation had extended itself into

both kingdoms. Himself a poet and a patron of poets, he attempted to establish in Aragon an academy of Troubadours, for the cultivation of the Provençal language, on the model of the academy of the Floral Games at Toulouse. He at the same time founded a similar institution in Castile, under the name of *Consistorio de la Gaya Ciencia*, devoted to Castilian poetry. To this assembly he dedicated a poem, entitled *La Gaya Ciencia*, in which he attempts to shew how essentially necessary is the union between erudition and imagination, and how expedient it was, in the cultivation of modern literature, to profit by the progress which had been made in classical pursuits. He died in 1434.

A pupil of the Marquis de Villena, Don Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, Marquis de Santillana, was one of the first nobles and most celebrated poets of the court of John II. He was born on the first of August, 1398; and died on the twenty-fifth of March, 1458. Eminent by his political and military virtues, as well as by his rank and riches, he was destined to acquire no small influence in the state. The severity and purity of his manners contributed no less to his reputation than his love for literature and science. It is asserted that strangers were in the habit of visiting Castile solely for the purpose of beholding this accomplished cavalier. During the internal com-

motions of that kingdom, he did not invariably attach himself to the fortunes of King John, though that monarch frequently attempted to regain the friendship of a man whom he highly esteemed, and to whom he had been in the habit of confiding the most important affairs. A letter by him to the Prince of Portugal, on the ancient poets of Spain, is still preserved; a little work remarkable for the erudition and the sound criticism which it contains. Sanchez has reprinted it and added a commentary; and in many of the preceding pages we have been much indebted to this volume. In the midst of the revolutions at court, and of his victories over the Moors, Santillana found time to compose some little poems full of that martial ardour and gallant feeling which at that period distinguished the Spanish nation. It was on occasion of his exploits at the battle of Olmedo in 1445, in which the king of Castile [¶]vanquished the king of Navarre, that Mendoza was created Marquis de Santillana. The first marquise in Castile had been created in favour of the house of Villena, but it had already reverted to the crown. Santillana was the second.

The works of the Marquis de Santillana owe their principal reputation to that which, in our eyes, is now their greatest defect, their learning, or rather their pedantry. The passionate attachment to learning, which reigned in Italy in the fif-

teenth century, had also become prevalent in Spain. The allegories which the Marquis frequently borrows from Dante, and the numerous citations for which he seems to have put all antiquity under contribution, render his poems dull and fatiguing. His *Centiloquio, or Collection of a hundred maxims on morals and politics*, each inculcated in eight short verses, was composed for the instruction of the Prince Royal, afterwards Henry IV. of Castile, and has enjoyed a high reputation. It has been printed several times in Spain and in other countries, and commentaries have been added to it. But several other little poems, of which I know only the titles, more powerfully excite my curiosity; such are *The Prayer of the Nobles*, *The Tears of Queen Margaret*, and *La Comedieta de Ponza*. Under the latter title, the Marquis de Santillana described the battle of Ponza, in which Alfonso V. of Aragon, and the King of Navarre, were made prisoners by the Genoese, on the fifteenth of August, 1435. Another curious work is the dialogue between Bias and Fortune, which the Marquis at the time when he was detained in prison on account of his opposition to the arbitrary measures of the king, composed and placed at the commencement of a *Life of the Greek philosopher*. By the side of these productions, which are evidently the composition of a man who has mingled in important affairs of state, we find some

light poems possessing all the simplicity and sweetness of the most pleasing pastorals.*

* As for example, the following *serrana*, or serenade, to the shepherdess de la Finojosa. [The English version subjoined has been kindly communicated by Mr. Wiffen, to whose elegant pen the Editor will have more than one opportunity, in the course of this work, of acknowledging his obligations. *Tr.*]

Moza tan hermosa	I ne'er on the border
Non vi en la frontera,	Saw girl fair as Rosa,
Como una vaquera	The charming milk-maiden
De la Finojosa.	Of sweet Finojosa.
Faciendo la via	Once making a journey
De Calateveño	To Santa Maria,
A santa Maria,	Of Calataveño,
Vencido del sueño	From weary desire
Por tierra fragosa	Of sleep, down a valley
Perdi la carrera,	I strayed, where young Rosa
Do vi la vaquera	I saw, the milk-maiden
De la Finojosa.	Of lone Finojosa.
En un verde prado	In a pleasant green meadow,
De rosas y flores,	Midst roses and grasses,
Guardando ganado	Her herd she was tending,
Con otros pastores,	With other fair lasses ;
La vi tan hermosa	So lovely her aspect,
Que apenas creyera	I could not suppose her
Que fuese vaquera	A simple milk-maiden
De la Finojosa.	Of rude Finojosa.
Non crio las rosas	I think not primroses
De la primavera	Have half her smile's sweetness,
Sean tan hermosas	Or mild modest beauty ;
Nin de tal manera ;	(I speak with discreetness.)
Fablando sin glosa,	O had I beforehand
Si antes supiera	But known of this Rosa,

Juan de Mena, who was born at Cordova in 1412, and died in 1456, was another of the poets of the court of John II., and was patronised by that monarch, and by the Marquis de Santillana. He is called by the Spaniards, the Ennius of Castile. From his education at Salamanca he had derived much more pedantry than learning; and a journey which he made to Rome, and during which he became acquainted with the writings of Dante, instead of inflaming his poetical zeal, seems to have fettered his taste, and converted him into a frigid imitator. His great work is entitled *El Labyrintho*, or *las tresciento Coplas*; an allegorical composition in tetradactylic verses of eight lines each, descriptive of human life. His object is to describe every æra of history, to honour virtue, to punish crimes, and to represent the power of destiny. Implicitly following the allegories of Dante, he commences by wandering in a desert, where he is pursued by voracious wild beasts. Here a beautiful woman takes him under her protection. This is Providence. She shews

Da quella vaquera	The handsome milk-maiden
De la Finojosa.	Of far Finojosa ;
Non tanto mirara	Her very great beauty
Su mucha beldad	Had not so subdued,
Porque me dejara	Because it had left me
En mi libertad ;	To do as I would.
Mas dixe donosa,	I have said more, oh fair one !
Por saber quien era	By learning 'twas Rosa,
Aquella vaquera	The charming milk-maiden
De la Finojosa.	Of sweet Finojosa.

him the three wheels of destiny, which distribute men into the past, the present, and the future, according to the influence of the seven planets. Numerous pedantic descriptions, conveyed in tiresome allegories, form the bulk of this work, which still finds admirers in Spain, on account of the patriotic enthusiasm with which Juan de Mena speaks of the celebrated men of his country.*

* I have seen an edition of the *tresciento Coplas* of Juan de Mena, printed at Toledo in 1547, *folio, lit. goth.* accompanied with a very diffuse and affected commentary. Few works appear to me more difficult to read, or more tiresome. In order to give an idea of the versification of this celebrated poet, who little deserves his reputation, I have extracted two stanzas in which he describes the machinery of his poem.

Bolviendo los ojos a do me mandava,
 Vi mas adentro muy grandes tres ruedas;
 Las dos eran firmes, immotas y quedas,
 Mas la del medio boltar no cessava.
 Vi que debaxo de todas estava
 Cayda por tierra gran gente infinita,
 Que avia en la frente cada qual escrita
 El nombre y la suerte por donde passava.

Y vi que en la una que no se movia,
 La gente que en ella avia de ser,
 Y la que debaxo esperaba caer,
 Con turbido velo su morte cubria;
 Y yo que de aquello muy poco sentia
 Fiz de mi dubda complida palabra,
 A mi guiadora, rogando que me abra
 Aquesta figura que yo no entendia.

• St. 56 and 57.

The

The Spanish poets of the fifteenth century, however, rarely undertook works of any length. Their poems in general were merely the expression of a single sentiment, a single image, or a single witty idea, conveyed with an air of gallantry. These fugitive pieces, usually of a lyrical nature, in many respects resemble the songs of the ancient Troubadours, and have been united in a work which may be regarded as a complete collection of the Spanish poetry of the fifteenth century. This work is entitled the *Cancionero General*, or Collection of Songs. It was commenced in the reign of John II. by Alfonso de Baena, and was continued by Fernando del Castillo, who published it in the early part of the sixteenth century. Since that period it has had many additions made to it, and has been frequently reprinted. The earlier editions contain the songs and lyrical poems of a hundred and thirty-six writers of the fifteenth century, besides a number of anonymous pieces. In this *Cancionero*, the devotional poems are placed at the commencement of the volume. Boutterwek, with whose opinion I am happy to corroborate my

The only portion of the whole poem which possesses any interest, is the episode of the Count de Buelna, overwhelmed together with his soldiers by the flowing of the tide, at the siege of Gibraltar. But as there was neither allegory nor enigma to be explained in this part of the volume, the commentators have neglected it, considering it unworthy of their notice.

own, has expressed his surprise at the absence of feeling and enthusiasm which these compositions betray. They contain, for the most part, wretched attempts to play upon words, and even upon letters; as for instance, upon the letters composing the name of Mary. Scholastic definitions and personifications still more frigid, are found in others of these poems.* The amatory

* It was regarded as a high effort of the poetic art, to describe the most incomprehensible mysteries in a few verses, which thus formed a mass of contradiction. The following *cancion* of Soria is an instance :

El sy, sy, el como no sè
 Desta tan ardua quistion,
 Que no alcança la razon
 Adonde sube la fé.

Ser Dios ombre, y ombre Dios,
 Ser mortal y no mortal,
 Ser un ser, estremos dos,
 Y en un ser no ser ygual,
 Es siempre, sera, no fue.
 Siempre fue, y siempre son,
 Siempre son, mas no son due,
 Y aqui la razon es fé.

At other times these religious poems display, if not more reason, at least more imagination; as an example, we may quote the following lines by Alonzo de Proaza, *en loor de Sancta Catalina de Sena* :

Tres fieros vestiglos, sobervios gigantes,
 Contrarios perpetuos del bien operar,

pieces which fill the greater part of this work are very monotonous and fatiguing. The Castilian poets of this period appear to have thought it necessary to dwell upon, and to draw out their subject, as long as they could give a new turn to the preceding ideas and expressions. To this they

Salieron señora con vos a lidiar,
 En diestros cavallos, ligeros, volantes.
 Mas esta batalla por vos acceptantes
 Los sanctos tres votos de vos assenciales,
 Cavalgan armados, y en fuerças yguales
 Se hallan en campo los seys batallantes.
 Los unos enlazan los yelmos daquende,
 Los otros las lanças engoçan dallende.
 Y unos a otros se dexan venir,
 Y danse recuentros de tanta fiereza,
 Que creo lidiantes de tal fortaleza
 En justas se vieron jamas combatir.
 La sancta pobreza ya hizo salir
 Al mundo del rencle del golpe primero.
 La fuerte obediencia al diablo romero
 Hizo las armas en campo rendir.
 E desta manera vencidos los dos,
 Quedaron señora subjectos a vos.
 El blanco cavallo de mas excelencia
 En el que justava la casta donzella
 Encuentra, derriba, por tierra tropella
 La carne que haze mayor resistencia:
 Que 'l mundo, la carne, e 'l gran Lucifer
 Nunca mas armas osassen hazer
 Con la grandeza de vuestra potencia.
 E aquesta batalla de tres contra tres
 Por estas tres coplas se supo despues.

frequently sacrificed truth and feeling. If we sometimes discover in them the same poverty of thought which we remark amongst the Troubadours, we may likewise observe the same simplicity, together with a pomp and power of expression peculiar to the Spanish writers. It was not any imitation of the Troubadours which produced this resemblance, the cause of which may be traced to that spirit of romantic love which pervaded the whole South of Europe. In Italy, after the time of Petrarch, that spirit yielded to the purer taste which an acquaintance with the classical authors introduced; but in Spain the writers of love-songs were by no means so refined, and were rather passionate than tender in the expression of their feelings. The sighs of the amorous Italians were converted amongst the Spaniards into cries of grief. Burning passions and despair, the stormy feelings, and not the ecstasies of the heart, are the subjects of the Spanish love-songs. One very characteristic peculiarity of these songs is the perpetually recurring description of the combats between reflection or reason, and passion. The Italians, on the contrary, interested themselves much less in displaying the triumphs of reason. The Spaniards, whose habits were more serious, endeavoured to preserve, even amidst their follies, an appearance of philosophy; but their philosophy, thus strangely and unseasonably introduced, is productive of a most incongruous effect.

Perhaps no poets have ever equalled the Spanish in describing the power of love, when the heart is abandoned to its impetuosity. Thus in some stanzas, by Alonzo of Carthagená, afterwards archbishop of Burgos, we meet with a storm of passion, to which the now neglected measure of the *versos de arte mayor*, which is well adapted to describe the emotion of the heart, adds great truth and nature.

* Oh! fierce is this flame that seizes my breath,
My body, my soul, my life, and my death;
It burns in its fury, it kindles desire,
It consumes, but alas! it will never expire.

How wretched my lot! No respite I know,
My heart is indifferent to joy or to woe;
For this flame in its anger kills, burns, and destroys,
My grief and my pleasures, my sorrows and joys.

* La fuerza del fuego que alumbra que ciega
Mi cuerpo, mi alma, mi muerte, mi vida,
Do entra, do hiere, do toca, do llega,
Mata y no muere su llama encendida.
Pues que hare triste, que todo me ofende?
Lo bueno y lo malo me causan congoxa,
Quemandome el fuego que mata, qu'enciende,
Su fuerza que fuerza, que ata, que prende,
Que prende, que suelta, que tira que afloxa.

A do yre triste, que alegre me halle,
Pues tantos peligros me tienen en medio,
Que llore, que ria, que grite, que calle,
Ni tengo, ni quiero, ni espero remedio.
Ni quiero que quiere, ni quiero querer,

In the midst of such perils, all methods I try
 To escape from my fate—I weep, laugh, and sigh;
*I would hope, I would wish for some respite from grief,
 But have not a wish, to wish for relief.*

If I vanquish this foe, or if vanquish'd I be,
 Is alike in the midst of my torments to me;
 I would please, and displease, but, between me and you,
 I know not, alas! what I say or I do.

Many of the amatory poems of the Spaniards
 are paraphrases of prayers and devotional pieces.
 This mixture of divine and human love, which

Pues tanto me quicre tan ravisosa plaga,
 Ni ser yo vencido, ni quiero vencer,
 Ni quiero pesár, ni quiero plazer,
 Ni sé que me diga, ni sé que me haga.

Pues que haré triste con tanta fatiga?
 Aquien me mandays que mis males quexe?
 A que me mandays que siga que diga,
 Que sienta, que haga, que tome, que dexe?
 Dadme remedio que yo no lo hallo
 Para este mi mal que no es escondido;
 Que muestro, que encubro, que sufro, que callo,
 Por donde de vida ya soy despedido.

These three stanzas are amongst the most celebrated specimens of ancient Spanish poetry; as we may gather from the numerous commentaries of which they have been the subject. The first in date is by Carthagená himself, who has extended the same thoughts into twenty stanzas.

was not the result of any improper feeling, may well be regarded at the present day as highly profane. Thus Rodriguez del Padron wrote *The Seven Joys of Love*, in imitation of *The Seven Joys of the Virgin Mary*. He likewise published *The Ten Commandments of Love*. On the other hand Sanchez de Badajoz wrote the Testament of Love, in which he has whimsically imitated the style of the notaries in making the final disposition of his soul. He occasionally borrows passages from Job and other parts of the old Testament, in order to give his Testament a scriptural character.*

* Amongst the profane productions of these very pious individuals, the following appears to me to be one of the most highly wrought: *El Pater noster de las mugeres, hacho por Salazar* :

Rey alto a quien adoramos,
 Alumbra mi entendimiento,
 A loar en lo que cuento
 A ti que todos llamargos
Pater noster.

Porque diga el dissavor
 Que las crudas damas hazen,
 Como nunca nos complazen,
 La suplico a ti señor
Qui es in cælis.

Porque las heziste belas,
 Dizien solo con la lengua,
 Porque no caygan en mengua
 De mal devotas donzellas,
Sanctificetur.

In the works of the Spanish poets we find regular forms of composition, which are peculiarly adapted to lyrical poetry, as the Italians had their sonnets, and the Provençals their *retrouanges*. In the first rank must be placed the *cancioni*, properly so called, which resemble epi-

Pero por su vana gloria
Viendose tan estimadas,
Tan queridas, tan amadas,
No les cabe en la memoria
Nomen tuum.

Y algunas damas que van
Sobre interesse de aver,
Dizien con mucho plazer
Si coça alguna las dan
Adveniat.

Y con este desscar
Locuras, pompas y arcos,
Por cumplir bien sus desseos
No se curan, de buscar
Regnum tuum.

Y estas de quien no se esconde
Bondad que en ellas se cuida,
A cosa que se les pida
Jamás ninguna responde
Fiat.

Mas la que mas alto està
Miraldo si la hablays,
Si a darle la combidays
Sereys cierto que os dira
Voluntas tua, &c.

grams or madrigals in twelve lines. The four first lines present the idea, and the eight which follow develope and apply it.* The *Villancicos* contain a single sentiment, expressed in two or three lines, and enlarged upon in two or three little couplets†. The comments, which Bouterwek

* The following *cancion*, likewise by Carthegena, is very much in the Spanish spirit and taste :

No sé para que nasci,
 Pues en tal extremo esto
 Que l morir no quiere a mi,
 Y el bivar no quiero yo.

Todo el tiempo que biviere
 Teré muy justa querella
 De la muerte, pues no quiere
 A mi, queriendo yo a ella.
 Que fin espero de aqui,
 Pues la muerte me nego ;
 Porque claramente vio
 Que era vida para mí.

† A *villancico*, by Escrivá, is here given :

Que sentis coraçon mio
 No dezis,
 Que mal es el que sentis ?
 Que sentistes aquel día
 Quando mi señora vistes,
 Que perdistes alegría ?
 Y des quando despedistes,
 Como a mi nunca bolvistcs ?
 No dezis,
 Donde estays que no venis ?

happily compares to musical variations of a well-known air, are founded upon a distich or a quatrain from some other author, each verse of which is the theme of a couplet, and forms the last line.*

The poetry of Spain up to the reign of Charles V. may be divided into various classes.

Qu'es de vos, qu'en mi no hallo,
 Coraçon, quien os agena ?
 Qu'es de vos, que aunque callo,
 Vuestro mal tambien me pena ?
 Quien os atò tal cadena
 No dezis,
 Que mal es el que sentis ?

The following motto was the device of a knight :

Sin vos, y sin Dios, y mi.

Glosa de don Jorge Manrique.

Yo soy quien libre me vi,
 Yo quien pudiera olvidaros,
 Yo soy el que por amaros
 Estoy desque os conoci
 Sin Dios y sin vos y mi.

Sin Dios porque en vos adoro,
Sin vos pues no me quereys,
 Pues *sin mi* ya esta decoro,
 Que vos soys quien me teneys.
 Assi que triste naci,
 Pues que pudiera olvidaros,
 Yo soy el que por amaros
 Esto desque os conoci
 Sin Dios, y sin vos, y mi.

First, the romances of Chivalry, which amount in number to upwards of a thousand, and which were at once the delight and instruction of the people. These compositions, which in fact possess more real merit, more sensibility, and more invention than any other poetry of that remote period, have been regarded by the learned with disdain, while the names of their authors have been entirely forgotten. The lyrical poems are animated with great warmth of passion and richness of imagination; but they frequently display traces of too great study and refinement, so that the sentiment suffers by the attempt at fine writing, and *concetti* usurp the place of true poetical expression. The allegorical pieces were then placed in the first rank, and are those upon which the authors founded their chief claims to glory. From the versification alone we may perceive the high estimation in which this style of writing was held by the poets themselves, since the *versos de arte mayor* (the highly artificial verse) were always made use of. These poems are generally frigid and high-flown imitations of Dante, as little qualified to rival the *Divina Comedia* as the *Dettamondo* of Fazio de' Uberti, or any other of the allegories of his Italian imitators. In the course of four centuries the poetry of Castile made no perceptible progress. If the language had become more polished, and the versification a little more

smooth, and if the literary productions of that period had been enriched from the stores of foreign countries, these advantages were more than outweighed by the introduction of pedantry and false taste.

The art of prose composition had likewise made a very slow progress. Some writers of this period have been transmitted to us, particularly the chroniclers ; but their style is overloaded and tiresome. Facts are heaped upon facts, and related in involved sentences, the monotony of which equals their want of connexion. Notwithstanding this, they attempt, in imitation of the classical authors, to give the speeches of their heroes. These orations, however, have nothing of the spirit of antiquity about them, no simplicity, and no truth. We seem as if we were listening to the heavy and pedantic speeches of the chancellors, or to the oriental pomp of the Scriptures.

Boutterwek, however, discovers considerable merit in some of the biographical writers, and mentions with praise Gutierre Diez de Gamez, who wrote the Life of Count Pedro Niño de Buelna, one of the most valiant knights of the court of Henry III. The following is the description given by Gamez of the French, after the expedition of Du Guesclin against Peter the Cruel had given him an opportunity of observing that people. "The French are a noble nation ;

they are wise, prudent, and discreet in all that appertains to a good education, to courtesy, and to good manners. They bestow much pains upon their garments, and dress richly; they attach themselves strongly to every thing which is proper for them; they are, besides, frank and liberal; they delight in giving pleasure to every one; they honour strangers much; they are skilful in giving praise, and they bestow it freely on noble actions. They are not suspicious; they do not allow their pique or anger to endure long, and they never attack another's honour, in word or deed, unless, perhaps, their own be exposed to danger. They are courteous and graceful in speech; they have much gaiety, and take great pleasure in lively conversation, which they much encourage. Both they and the French ladies are of an amorous complexion, upon which they pride themselves."

The Spaniards were thus initiated in epic, lyric, and allegorical poetry, in history, and in philosophy. They advanced in these various pursuits by their own exertions, opening their own way, without the assistance of strangers. Their progress, however, was necessarily slow; and until the period when Charles V. united the rich provinces of Italy to his empire, they derived little assistance from the advanced state of literature in other parts of Europe. They thus became proud of what they owed to their

own intellectual exertions. They felt attached to these national objects, and their poetry has, therefore, preserved its own strong and original colours. The drama thus arose amongst them before they had intermingled with other nations, and being formed on the ancient Castilian taste, and suited to the manners, the habits, and the peculiarities of the people for whom it was intended, it was much more irregular than the drama of the other nations of Europe. It did not display the same learning, nor was it formed upon those ingenious rules to which the Greek philosophers had subjected the art of poetry. Its object was to affect the hearts of the Spaniards, to harmonize with their opinions and customs, and to flatter their national pride. It is on this account, therefore, that neither the satirical remarks of other nations, nor the criticisms of their own men of letters, nor the prizes of their academies, nor the favours of their princes, have ever succeeded in persuading them to adopt a system which, at the present day, is predominant in the rest of Europe.

The Spaniards refer the origin of their drama in the fifteenth century, to three works of a very dissimilar kind: the mysteries represented in the churches, the satirico-pastoral drama entitled *Mingo Rebulgo*, and the dramatic romance of *Calixtus and Melibæa*, or *la Celestina*. The *Mysteries* with which their religious solemnities

were accompanied, and in which the most gross buffooneries were introduced into the representations of sacred writ, had incontestably a considerable influence on the Spanish drama. The *Autos sacramentales* of the most celebrated authors are formed, for the most part, on the model of these pious farces. The text, however, has not been preserved, and we cannot compare them with subsequent attempts. The *Mingo Rebulgo*, which was written in the early part of the fifteenth century, during the reign of John II. in order to ridicule that monarch and his court, is rather a political satire in dialogue, than a drama. *La Celestina*, however, merits the attention of all who wish to trace the true origin of the drama amongst the moderns. This singular production, the first act of which was written by an anonymous author towards the middle of the fifteenth century, at a period when the Parisians were passionately fond of the Mysteries and Moralities which were represented by the Fraternity of the Passion, and the clerks *de la Bazoche*, but long before any attempt at dramatic composition in any other of the modern languages, displays much real comic talent. The dialogue is often spirited, lively, and gay; the characters are tolerably drawn; the plot is intelligible and well conducted; and in the language of the lovers there is much warmth, passion, and feeling. The first author left the production incomplete. He

excites our interest by his description of the passion with which the beautiful Melibæa had inspired the young Calixtus. He apprises us of the obstacles which the relatives of the two lovers had opposed to their union, and he introduces Calixtus to a sorceress, or a sort of confidant called Celestina, who engages to forward his views. The storehouse in which Celestina deposits her philtres and charms is cleverly described, while her artful speeches and the flattery which she bestows on even the meanest domestics are told with great liveliness. In the dialogue, we alike recognize the author's acquaintance with the Latin language, and an imitation of the national manners. The plot was completed by the unknown author, but there was no indication of the catastrophe. Fernand de Rojas, having got possession of this fragment of a comedy about the year 1510, added twenty acts to the first, which was itself very long, and thus extended the drama to a degree which totally excluded its representation. He involves his characters in the most romantic adventures, and gives a tragical conclusion to the drama. Celestina is introduced into the house of Melibæa, where she corrupts the servants by bribes. By her charms and magical arts she deceives the lady, who yields to their influence. Scarcely, however, has she incurred the guilt, than her relations avenge their sullied honour. The do-

mestics, who had been employed by Celestina, perish by the sword or by poison, and she herself is poniarded. Calixtus is likewise killed, and Melibæa throws herself from the top of a tower. Thus the romance succeeds to comedy, and the interest which wit excites yields to the spirit of curiosity. Few works, however, have been more successful than this drama, commenced and finished in so different a spirit, at the distance of fifty years, and by two authors unacquainted with one another. Some enthusiastic persons have praised *la Celestina*, not only as being a masterpiece, in a literary point of view, but as a most moral work, and as the most salutary lesson ever given to youth to avoid irregularity and vice. Others have, with great reason, asserted that it was more prejudicial to good morals to publish the details of depravity, even for the purpose of stigmatizing them, than to pass them over in silence. •The church was consulted, but its decision was not altogether consistent. *La Celestina* was prohibited in Spain, and approved of in Italy, while numerous translations rendered it known in almost every country. The Spaniards still glory in this national production, which, according to them, opened the career of the drama to the moderns.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Age of Charles V. The Classics of Spain : Boscan ; Garcilaso ;
Mendoza ; Miranda ; Montemayor.

THE Spanish nation had, for a long period, dissipated its strength in internal contests. It had for four centuries attempted to expel its most industrious inhabitants from its bosom, while it had prodigally expended its blood in aggrandizing alternately the sovereigns of Castile or of Aragon, of Navarre, or of Portugal ; or in struggles against their prerogative. This nation, unknown it may almost be said in Europe, and which had taken no part in European politics, became at length united under one crown at the commencement of the sixteenth century. Spain now turned against other nations the prodigious power which had been hitherto confined within her own bosom. While she menaced the liberties of all the rest of Europe, she was deprived of her own, perhaps without remarking the loss, in the agitation of her many victories. Her character sustained an entire change ; and at the period when Europe was gazing with astonishment and terror on this phenomenon, her literature, which she formed in the schools of the vanquished nations, shone out in its full brilliancy.

The power of the Spanish nation, at the end of the fifteenth century, had received accessions fully sufficient to shake the equilibrium of Europe. Alfonso V. of Aragon, after having completed the conquest of Naples, had, it is true, left that kingdom to his natural son; and it was not until the year 1504, that Ferdinand the Catholic, by the most revolting treachery, recovered those dominions. Sicily, Sardinia, and the Balearic Isles had been already united to the crown of Aragon. The marriage of Ferdinand with the queen of Castile, without consolidating the two monarchies, gave that ambitious prince the command of all the armies of Spain, of which he speedily availed himself in Italy. Grenada was conquered from the Moors in the year 1492, by the united troops of Ferdinand and Isabella. In the same year Christopher Columbus discovered those vast countries, so remarkable for their riches and for their happy situation, in which the Spaniards found a new home, and from whence they drew treasures with which they flattered themselves they should subdue the world. In 1512, Ferdinand, as regent of Castile, conquered Navarre; and the whole of that extensive peninsula, with the exception of Portugal, yielded to the same power. When, in 1516, Charles V. added to this monarchy, the rich and industrious provinces of the Low Countries, his paternal dominions, and in 1519, the Imperial Crown, with the terri-

tories inherited from Maximilian, in Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia, the novelty of this extraordinary power, which so greatly exceeded the authority of any European potentate since the reign of Charlemagne, was certainly sufficient to turn the head of a youthful sovereign, and to inspire him with the fatal project of founding an universal monarchy. The reputation which Charles V. acquired by his victories, the respect and fear with which he impressed all the other nations of Europe, the glory of the Spanish arms, which he triumphantly led into Italy, France, and Germany, into countries whither the standard of Castile had never penetrated, all tended to deceive the Spanish nation, and to inspire them with an enthusiastic attachment to him whom they regarded as their hero, but who was, in fact, studiously endeavouring to subvert their laws and their constitution. The dreams of ambition in which the king and the nation equally indulged, were fatal to both. Charles V. in the midst of his victories, and notwithstanding the immense extent of his territories, was always, in proportion to his situation, weaker and poorer than Ferdinand and Isabella, his immediate predecessors. In every enterprise he was deprived of the fruits which he should have gathered, by the want of soldiers and of money; a want unknown to the former monarchs. The taxes collected from Italy, Spain, Flanders, and Germany,

together with all the treasures of the new world, were not sufficient to prevent his troops from disbanding for want of pay. The prodigious levies, which were perpetually making in all the subject states, never enabled him to meet the enemy with superior numbers in the open field; and, although he had succeeded as heir to very large territories, and had acquired others by union with the imperial crown, he did not add a single province to his states by the sword; but was, on the contrary, compelled to contract his hereditary territories on the Turkish frontier. The Spanish nation, the only one amongst the states subject to him, which he was enabled to preserve from foreign invasion, was, in his minority, despoiled by Cardinal Ximenes of a portion of its privileges. Intoxicated with the victories of their sovereign, they, day by day, surrendered more. The brave knights, who had been accustomed to fight only for the interests of their country, and to make war as long and in such manner as it pleased them, now conceived it a point of honour to display the most implicit obedience and devotion. Perpetually combating in quarrels which they little understood, and in which they took not the slightest interest, they entirely reduced their duties to the observance of the most severe discipline. In the midst of nations with whose language they were unacquainted, and whom they regarded with contempt, they signalized themselves by their

inflexibility and their cruelty. The first of European soldiers, they united no other qualifications to that character. To the enemy, the Spanish infantry presented a front of iron; to the unfortunate, an iron heart. They were invariably selected for the execution of any cruel project, from an assurance that no sympathies would stay them in the performance even of the most rigorous commands. They conducted themselves in a ferocious manner, during the wars against the Protestants in Germany, and they displayed equal cruelty towards the Catholics in the sacking of Rome. At the same period, the soldiers of Cortes and Pizarro, in the New World, gave proofs of a ferocity which has been the opprobrium of the Castilians; but of which no instance is to be found in the whole history of Spain before the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. Cruelty seemed to become the characteristic of the Spanish soldiery, as duplicity, of their chiefs. The most celebrated men of this age sullied themselves with acts of treachery, unequalled in history. The great Captain, Gonsalvo de Cordova, Piero Navarro, the Duke de Toledo, Antonio de Leva, and the most illustrious Castilians, who served under Ferdinand the Catholic and Charles V., made light of their word, and even of the most sacred oaths. So frequently are they accused of assassinating and poisoning their adversaries, that, though we should suspend our belief in each individual case,

yet, when we consider how numerous the accusations are, they necessarily tarnish the characters of these pretended heroes. At the same period, the clergy gained in power, in proportion as morality lost its influence. The Inquisition was established in 1478, in Castile, by the united authority of Ferdinand and Isabella. It was armed with extraordinary powers in order to repress the Moors, against whom there was not the slightest necessity for adopting such rigorous measures, even in the height of their power; and at this period, they had long ceased to be formidable.* Ferdinand, who was the most crafty of kings, although his zeal for the Inquisition had procured him the title of the Catholic, did not in fact take any interest in religion. He would never have devoted himself so eagerly to the establishment of the Inquisition, had he not regarded it as a powerful political engine, by which he might be able to terrify the nobles, and to reduce the people to dependence. It was necessary that a generation should pass away before the Spaniards could become inured to the sanguinary proceedings of the Inquisition, and that infernal system

* Juan de Torquemada, a Dominican, the confessor of Isabella, whom he induced before her marriage to take an oath, that if ever she ascended the throne, she would employ all her power in persecuting heretics and infidels, was the first Grand Inquisitor. In the space of fourteen years he summoned before the holy tribunal, a hundred thousand persons, and condemned six thousand to the flames.

had scarcely been firmly established, when Charles V. commenced his reign. The revolting spectacles of the *autos da fé* probably inspired the Spanish soldiers with that singular ferocity for which they were remarkable at this period, and which was so foreign to their national character. The Jews, against whom the people were much exasperated by jealousy of their commercial prosperity, were the first victims of the Inquisition. Though they formed a large proportion of the population, they were almost entirely extirpated. The Moors were next abandoned to the fury of the holy tribunal. The severities to which they were exposed drove them to resistance, and their resistance drew upon them fresh sufferings. The ancient ties, which had formerly connected the two people, were broken, and a spirit of irreconcilable hatred sprang up between them. The Inquisition never remitted its labours, until, having converted one portion of the Moors, devoted another to the faggot, and reduced still greater numbers to absolute ruin, Philip III. was at last prevailed upon to expel from their homes six hundred thousand of these unfortunate creatures, the relics of a numerous and powerful nation. The Inquisition then turned its watchful eye upon the Christians themselves; anxious that no error or dissent in matters of faith should exist within the Spanish territories. At the period of the Reformation, when the intel-

lect of all Europe was occupied with religious controversies, the holy office succeeded in preventing the establishment in Spain of any of the reformed opinions. All who attempted to introduce them were no sooner discovered, than they were committed to the flames. Terrified by this example, the rest of the nation anxiously avoided all metaphysical studies and religious speculations; and with them they abandoned every intellectual pursuit which might lead them into such frightful dangers upon earth, while they exposed them, according to their instructors, even to more fatal perils in another state of existence.

Thus it appears that the reign of Charles V., notwithstanding the blaze of glory by which it is surrounded, was no less destructive to Spain than to Italy. The Spaniards were at once despoiled of their civil and religious liberty, of their private and public virtues, of humanity and of good faith, of their commerce, of their population, and of their agriculture. In return for these losses they acquired a military reputation, and the hatred of the nations amongst whom they had carried their arms. But, as we have had occasion to observe in speaking of Italy, it is not at the moment when a nation loses its political privileges that the progress of the intellect is stayed. It requires the lapse of half a century before the spirit of literature declines, or becomes

extinct. Whilst Charles V. was laying the foundation for the false wit, the tumid style, and the affectation which, with other defects, distinguish Gongora and his school in the succeeding age, he produced an entirely contrary effect upon his contemporaries. He roused their enthusiasm, by placing before their eyes their national glory; and he developed their genius, while, by the mixture of foreigners with Castilians, he matured their taste.

After the union of Aragon and Castile, the superior importance of the latter country induced the Spanish monarch to transfer the seat of government to Madrid. The Castilian now began to be considered as the language of all Spain. The Limousin, or Provençal, which was still preserved in the legal proceedings of the Aragonese, and amongst the common people, had been abandoned by authors and poets for the language of the court. It was, however, from amongst those who thus abandoned the native language of Aragon for that of Castile, that an individual proceeded, who, in the reign of Charles V., produced an entire revolution in Castilian poetry. He had never become attached by early association to the harmony of Castilian verse, or to the spirit of Castilian poetry, and he probably found the poetry of Italy more analogous to the Provençal, to which he had been from his infancy accustomed. He was, in fact, endowed with a graceful delicacy of style and a richness of imagination, which enabled him

to introduce a purer taste, and to give his own personal feelings an ascendancy over those of a whole nation.

The name of this author was Juan Boscan Almogaver; he was born about the close of the fifteenth century, and was of a noble family at Barcelona. He had served in his youth, and afterwards devoted himself to travelling; but on his return to Spain in 1526, he became acquainted at Grenada with Andrea Navagero, then ambassador from the Venetians to the Emperor, and a celebrated poet and historian, who inspired him with the classical taste which then reigned in Italy. His friend Garcilaso de la Vega associated himself with him in the project of effecting a reformation in Spanish poetry. Both of these writers were distinguished by their correct and graceful style, and both despised the accusations of their adversaries, who reproached them with endeavouring to introduce into a valiant nation the effeminate tastes of the people whom it had subdued. They went so far as to overthrow all the laws of Castilian versification, in order to introduce new canons, founded upon a system diametrically opposite to that which had hitherto prevailed. In this attempt they succeeded. The ancient Castilian metre consisting of short lines, which was the true national measure, was always composed of a long syllable preceding a short one. In fact four trochees succeeded one

another. Boscan introduced iambics instead of trochees, as in Italian, and the lines were thus composed of short syllables preceding long ones. In the *redondilhas* they seldom made use of more than six or eight syllables, and in the verses *de arte mayor* of twelve. Boscan abandoned both these forms, and adopted the heroic Italian verse of five iambics, or ten syllables, and the mute. When we remember that the greater part of the ancient Spanish romances were never rhymed, but merely terminated with assonants, and that in determining the verse, the ear was guided only by the quantity, it is curious to see a nation consenting to the loss of an harmonious metre, in which they had always found delight, and adopting a measure directly contrary to that which they had before employed.

Boscan, who was one of the instructors of the too celebrated Duke of Alva, ended his days in a pleasant retreat, in the bosom of his family and his friends. He died before the year 1544.

The first volume of Boscan's poems contains his youthful compositions in the ancient Castilian taste. The second consists of sonnets and songs in the Italian style. Although in the latter poems we easily trace an imitation of Petrarch, yet they exhibit much of the spirit of a Spaniard. Boscan has happily caught the precision of Petrarch's language, but he has rarely preserved the sweetness of his melody. His colours are stronger,

and his warmth is more impassioned, but it does not affect us so much as the deep and sweet feelings of the Tuscan poet. The perpetually recurring conflicts between the reason and the passions, so favourite a theme with the Spanish poets, fatigue us by their monotony. The merit of lyrical poetry, and more especially of sonnets, depends so much upon the expression and the harmony of the language, that I have no hopes of being able to give any idea of the charm of Boscan's poetry to those who are not acquainted with the Spanish. Indeed, that precision of style and that rare judgment which constitute his chief merits, will, when he is compared with the other Spanish poets, give his compositions an air of studious refinement and affectation, if they are judged by our own rules of criticism.*

* I have thought it right to subjoin a few specimens of the poems of Boscan for the benefit of the Spanish scholar, but I have not ventured to translate them. The first sonnet, which is of a melancholy cast, cannot be wholly freed from the charge of affectation :

Aun bien no fuy salido de la cuna,
 Ni de l'ama la leche buve dexado,
 Quando el amor me tuvo condenado
 A ser de los que siguen su fortuna ;

Diome luego miserias, de una en una,
 Por hazerme costumbre en su cuydado,
 Despues, en mi d'un golpe ha descargado
 Quanto mal hay debaxo de la luna.

The third volume of Boscan's poems consists of a translation or imitation of the poem of Hero

En dolor fuy criado y fuy nascido,
Dando d'un triste passo en otro amargo,
Tanto que si hay mas passo es de la muerte.

O coraçon, que siempre has padecido,
Dime, tan fuerte mal como es tan largo,
Y mal tan largo, di, como es tan fuerte ?

The following sonnet is of a no less melancholy description :

Dexadme en paz, o duros pensamientos !
Baste os el daño y la verguença hecha,
Si ~~todo~~ lo hé passado, que aprovecha
Inventar sobre mi nuevos tormentos.

Natura en mi perdio sus ~~momentos~~ ^{momentos}.
El alma ya a los pies del dolor se echa ;
Tiene por bien, en regla tan estrecha,
A tantos casos, tantos sufrimientos.

Amor, fortuna y muerte qu'es presente,
Me llevan a la fin por sus jornadas,
Y a mi cuenta devria ser llegado.

Yo quando a caso afloxa el accidente,
Si buelvo el rostro, y miro las pisadas,
Tiemblo de ver por donde mi han passado.

The following is the conclusion of his poem of Hero and Leander, which, as it contains about 2,800 verses, may be considered his principal work :

Canta con boz suave y dolorosa,
O Musa, los amores lastimeros
Que en suave dolor fueron criados.

and Leander, usually attributed to Musæus. The language is pure and elegant, the versification natural, and the style of the narrative at once pleasing and noble. In the same volume we find an elegy under the name of *Capitulo*, and two Epistles, one of which, addressed to Diego de Mendoza, gives us a pleasing picture of the poet enjoying, in his country retreat and in the bosom of his family, the happiness of domestic life.

I cannot conclude without mentioning a frag-

Canta tambien la triste mar en medio,
 Y a Sesto de una parte, y de otra Abydo,
 Y amor aca y alla yendo y viniendo.
 Y aquella diligente lumbrezilla,
 Testigo fidedigno dulce mensagera
 De los fieles y dulces amadores.

Però comiença ya de cantar Musa,
 El proceso y el fin de estos amantes,
 El mirar, el hablar, el entenderse,
 El yr del uno, el esperar del otro,
 El dessear y el acudir conforme,
 La lumbre muerta, y a Leandro muerto.

Boscan, who survived Garcilaso by five or six years, was desirous of publishing his own works in conjunction with those of his friend. He announced four volumes of poems, three by himself, and the fourth by the poet, who, in concert with him, had reformed the taste of the Spaniards. He did not live to finish this work, and his poems, together with those of Garcilaso, appeared after his death. I am only acquainted with the edition of Venice, 1553, 8vo.

ment by Boscan, in stanzas of eight lines each, giving a description of the Kingdom of Love, which was probably designed to form part of an epic poem. The verses are remarkable for the harmony of their style and for their elegance of expression, which enable us to comprehend the praises which the Spaniards have bestowed upon a writer whom they regard as their first classical poet. But the ideas, the sentiments, and the thoughts, are all that can be transferred from one language to another. When the beauty of poetry consists merely in its harmony and its colouring, it is in vain to hope that it can ever be appreciated by foreigners.

Garcilaso de la Vega was born in 1500, or, according to others, in 1503, at Toledo, of a noble family. He was the friend and rival of Boscan, the disciple of Petrarch and of Virgil, and the man who contributed most towards the introduction of Italian taste into Spain. He was a younger son of Garcilaso de la Vega, counsellor of state to Ferdinand and Isabella; who, according to the romances and the history of the wars of the Moors of Grenada, displayed great bravery in single combat against a Moor, on the Vega, or plain of Grenada. In remembrance of this act of heroism Ferdinand bestowed upon his family the surname of Vega. Although designed by nature for a rural life, and although his poems invariably manifest the benevolence and the extreme

mildness of his character, his brilliant but troubled life was passed amidst the turmoils of a camp. In 1529, he was attached to a Spanish corps, which valiantly repulsed the Turks in Austria. A romantic adventure with one of the ladies of the court, in which he was engaged at the instigation of one of his relatives, drew upon him the displeasure of the Emperor. He was banished to one of the islands on the Danube, where he employed himself in the composition of some melancholy poems. In 1535, he accompanied Charles V. in his hazardous expedition against Tunis. He returned from thence to Sicily and Naples, where he wrote several pastorals. In the following year, upon the invasion of Provence by Charles V. he had the command of a body of eleven companies of infantry. Being despatched by the Emperor to attack a fortified tower, he was the first to mount the breach, when he was mortally wounded on the head. He died a few weeks afterwards at Nice, whither he had been conveyed, in 1536.*

The poems of this writer present few traces of his active and troubled life. His delicacy, his sensibility, and his imagination, remind us of Petrarch more than even the works of Boscan. Unfortunately, he occasionally abandons himself

* It was another Garcilaso de la Vega, but of the same family, although his mother was a Peruvian, who wrote the History of Peru and of Florida.

to that refinement and false wit which the Spaniards mistook for the language of passion. Amongst the thirty sonnets which Garcilaso has left, there are several in which we remark that sweetness of language and that delicacy of expression which so completely captivate the ear, together with a mixture of sadness and of love, of the fear and the desire of death, which powerfully expresses the agitation of the soul. The translation of one of these sonnets of Garcilaso, although it should give only a faint idea of his poetry, will afford a picture of the singular nature of Castilian love ; a passion which even in the fiercest warriors assumed so submissive and so languishing a character :

SONNET XV.*

If lamentations and complaints could rein
 The course of rivers as they roll'd along,
 And move on desert hills, attir'd in song,
 The savage forests ; if they could constrain
 Fierce tygers and chill rocks to entertain
 The sound, and with less urgency than mine,
 Lead tyrant Pluto and stern Proserpine,
 Sad and subdued with magic of their strain ;

-
- * Si quexas y lamentos puèden tanto
 Que enfrenaron el curso de los rios,
 Y en los desertos montes y sombríos
 Los arboles movieron con su canto ;
 Si convirtieron a escuchar su llanto
 Los fieros tigres, y peñascos frios,
 Si en fin con menos casos que los mios
 Baxaron a los reynos del espanto :

Why will not my vexations, being spent
 In misery and in tears, to softness soothe
 A bosom steel'd against me? with more ruth
 An ear of wrapt attention should be lent
 The voice of him that mourns himself for lost,
 Than that which sorrow'd for a forfeit ghost!

But the most celebrated of Garcilaso's poems is that in which he has given a model to the Spanish writers, which has been imitated by numbers who have never been able to equal the original. This poem is the first of his three Eclogues. It was written at Naples, where he felt inspired at once with the spirit of Virgil and of Sanazzaro. Two shepherds, Salicio and Nemoroso, meeting one another, mutually express in verse the torments which they have suffered; the one from the infidelity, the other from the death, of his shepherdess. In the complaints of

Porque no ablandará mi trabajosa
 Vida, en miseria y lagrimas pasada,
 Un coração conmigo endurecido?

Con mas piedad devria ser escuchada
 La voz del que se llora por perdido,
 Que la del que perdio y llora otra cosa.

[The above translation, as well as that which follows from the Eclogue, is borrowed from Mr. Wiffen's very elegant and spirited translation of the works of Garcilaso; to which he has prefixed an able Essay on Spanish Poetry. *Tr.*]

the former there is softness, delicacy, and submission, and in those of the latter, a depth of grief; while in both we find a purity of pastoral feeling which appears more remarkable when we remember that the author was a warrior, destined a few months afterwards to perish in battle.

The shadow, at all events, of a pastoral is capable of being preserved in a translation; whilst an ode or a sonnet is frequently lost. In order to produce its full effect, an eclogue has, however, need of all the ornaments peculiar to that style of composition. If it is deprived of even one of the illusions with which it is invested, its defects become visible, and we are struck with its insipid monotony. The translation is injurious to the poet, even from its apparent fidelity, which exposes the feebleness of the composition, whilst it suffers the charm to evaporate. On the other hand, we should communicate a very vague idea of the early poets of Spain did we only give the opinions of their critics without presenting a single example of their own sentiments and thoughts. The following are a few stanzas from this celebrated eclogue:

SALICIO.

Through thee the silence of the shaded glen,
Through thee the horror of the lonely mountain

SALICIO.

Por ti el silencio de la selva umbrosa,
Por ti la esquividad y apartamiento

Pleased me no less than the resort of men ;
 The breeze, the summer wood, and lucid fountain,
 The purple rose, white lily of the lake,
 Were sweet for thy sweet sake ;
 For thee the fragrant primrose, dropt with dew,
 Was wish'd, when first it blew.
 Oh, how completely was I in all this
 Myself deceiving ! Oh, the different part
 That thou wert acting, covering, with a kiss
 Of seeming love, the traitor in thy heart !
 This my severe misfortune long ago
 Did the soothsaying raven, sailing by
 On the black storm, with hoarse sinister cry,
 Clearly presage ; in gentleness of woe,
 Flow forth, my tears, 'tis meet that ye should flow !

How oft when slumbering in the forest brown,
 (Deeming it fancy's mystical deceit,)
 Have I beheld my fate in dreams foreshewn.
 One day methought that from the noontide heat,

Del solitario monte me agradaba.
 Por ti la verde hierba, el fresco vicento,
 El blanco lirio y colorada rosa
 Y dulce primavera deseaba.
 Ay ! quanto me engañaba !
 Ay ! quan diferente era,
 Y quan de otra manera
 Lo que, en tu falso pecho, se escondia !
 Bien claro con su voz me lo decia
 La siniestra corneja repitiendo
 La desventura mia.
 Salid sin duelo lagrimas corriendo.
 Quántas veces dormiendo en la floresta
 (Reputándolo yo por desvarío)

I drove my flocks to drink of Tagus' flood,
 And, under curtain of its bordering wood,
 Take my cool siesta, but arrived, the stream,
 I know not by what magic, changed its track,
 And in new channels, by an unused way,
 Roll'd its warp'd waters back :
 Whilst I, scorch'd, melting with the heat extreme,
 Went ever following in their flight, astray,
 The wizard waves : in gentleness of woe,
 Flow forth, my tears, 'tis meet that ye should flow.

* * * * *

But though thou wilt not come for my sad sake,
 Leave not the landscape thou hast held so dear ;
 Thou may'st come freely now without the fear
 Of meeting me, for, though my heart should break,
 Where late forsaken, I will now forsake.
 Come, then, if this alone detains thee, here

Vi mi mal entre sueños, desdichado !
 Soñaba que en el tiempo del estio
 Llevaba, por pasar allí la siesta,
 A beber en el Tajo mi ganado ,
 Y despues de llegado,
 Sin saber de qual arte,
 Por desusada parte,
 Y por nuevo camino el agua se iba :
 Ardiendo yo con la calor estiva,
 El curso enanojado iba siguiendo
 Del agua fugitiva.
 Salid sin duelo lagrimas corriendo.

* * * * *

Mas ya que á soccorerme aqui no vienes,
 No dexes el lugar que tanto amaste ;
 Que bien podras venir de mi segura.

Are meadows full of verdure, myrtles, bays,
 Woodlands, and lawns, and running waters clear,
 Belov'd in other days ;
 To which, bedew'd with many a bitter tear,
 I sing my last of lays.
 These scenes, perhaps, when I am far remov'd,
 At ease thou wilt frequent
 With him who rifled me of all I lov'd.
 Enough ! my strength is spent ;
 And leaving thee in his desir'd embrace,
 It is not much to leave him this sweet place.

* * * *

NEMOROSO.

As at the set of sun the shades extend,
 And when its circle sinks, that dark obscure
 Rises to shroud the world, on which attend
 The images that set our hair on end,

Yo dexaré el lugar do me dexaste :
 Ven ; si por solo esto te detienes,
 Ves aquí un prado lleno de verdura,
 Ves aquí una espesura,
 Ves aquí una agua clara,
 En otro tiempo cara,
 A quien de ti con lagrimas me quexo ;
 Quizá, aqui hallarás, pues ya me alejo,
 Al que todo mi bien quitarme puede ;
 Que pues el bien le dexo,
 No es mucho que el lugar tambien le quede.

* * * *

NEMOROSO.

Como al partir del sol la sombra crece,
 Y en cayendo su rayo, se levanta
 La negra escuridad que l' mundo cubre ;
 De do viene el temor que nos espanta,

Silence, and shapes mysterious as the grave :
 Till the broad sun sheds, once more, from the wave
 His lively lustre, beautiful and pure ;
 Such shapes were in the night, and such ill gloom
 At thy departure ; still tormenting fear
 Haunts, and must haunt me, until death shall doom
 The so much wish'd for sun to re-appear,
 Of thine angelic face, my soul to cheer,
 Resurgent from the tomb.

* * * * *

Poor lost Eliza ! of thy locks of gold
 One treasured ringlet in white silk I keep
 For ever at my heart, which when unroll'd,
 Fresh and pity o'er my spirit creep,
 And my insatiate eyes, for hours untold,
 O'er the dear pledge will like an infant weep :

Y la medrosa forma en que se ostrece
 Aquello, que la noche nos encubre,
 Hasta que el sol descubre
 Su luz pura y hermosa ;
 Tal es la tenebrosa
 Noche de tu partir, en que he quedado,
 De sombra y de temor atormentado ;
 Hasta que muerte el tiempo determine
 Que ser el deseado
 Sol de tu clara vista me encamine.

* * * * *

Una parte guardé de tus cabellos,
 Elisa, envueltos en un blanco paño,
 Que nunca de mi seno se me apartan :
 Descójolos, y de un dolor tamaño
 Enternecerme siento ; que sobre ellos
 Nunca mis ojos de llorar se hartan,
 Sin que de allí se partan,

With sighs more warm than fire, anon I dry
 The tears from off it, number, one by one,
 The radiant hairs, and with a love-knot tie;
 Mine eyes, this duty done,
 Give over weeping, and with slight relief,
 I taste a short forgetfulness of grief.

The two other eclogues of Garcilaso are regarded as inferior to the first. They are all three of considerable length. He has likewise written a few elegies, of which one was composed at the foot of Etna. His poems, when collected, form only a single small volume, but such is the power of harmonious language when accompanied by harmony of thought, that the few poems of Garcilaso de la Vega have secured him an immortal reputation, and gained him the first rank amongst the lyric and pastoral poets of his nation.

Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, the third of the Spanish classical poets, was one of the cele-

Con suspiros calientes,
 Mas que la llama ardientes,
 Los enxugo del llanto, y de consuno
 Casi los peso y cuento uno a uno;
 Juntandolos con un cordon los ato
 Tras esto el importuno
 Dolor me dexa descansar un rato.

* [To the translation of the poems of Garcilaso de la Vega by Mr. Wiffen, the Editor has already acknowledged his obligations. A *Spanish Anthology* has been recently announced by the same gentleman. Tr.]

brated politicians and generals who distinguished the brilliant reign of Charles V. He acted a principal part in the important events of that period; but the extreme severity of his character has left an unfavourable impression of him on the minds of those who know him only in the pages of history. He was born at Grenada about the commencement of the sixteenth century, of an illustrious family. To the study of the classics he united that of the Hebrew and Arabic tongues. Scholastic philosophy, theology, and the civil law, likewise shared his attention. While still a student at Salamanca, he wrote the *Life of Lazzarillo de Tormes*, the first and pleasantest of those memoirs of rogues, for which the Spaniards have manifested a peculiar taste. Being distinguished by Charles V. as a man well qualified to be employed in the most important transactions, he was appointed Ambassador to Venice soon after he had left the university. From thence he was despatched to the Council of Trent, to protect the interests of the Emperor, and his speech to this assembly in the year 1546 excited the admiration of all Christendom. In 1547, he proceeded with the title of Ambassador to the Papal Court, where he directed the movements of the Imperial party, throughout Italy; endeavouring to ruin all who were attached to the French cause, or who preserved any love for the ancient liberties of their country. He was, at the same

time, named Captain-general and Governor of Sienna. In concert with Cosmo de' Medici he succeeded in enslaving this last of the Republics of the Middle Ages, and, with a sceptre of iron, he crushed the spirit of liberty which still animated the Tuscans. Detested by Paul III., whom he was directed to humble even in his own court, hated by all the friends of liberty, governing only by severity, and incessantly exposed to the knives of assassins, he still retained his power till the reign of Julius III. by whom he was appointed Gonfaloniere of the Church. It was not until the year 1554 that Charles V., yielding to the instances of all his Italian subjects, recalled to his Court this detested minister. During his residence in Italy, amidst the agitations of his life and the severities of his government, he was still actively occupied in the encouragement of letters. Since the time of Petrarch, no one had devoted himself with equal ardour to the collection of Greek manuscripts, while he at the same time attempted to preserve from the injuries of time those works of art which reflect such glory on antiquity. In furtherance of this design, he caused the convent of Mount Athos to be examined, making use of the public character with which he was invested, and employing the credit which he enjoyed even at the Court of Soliman, to promote the interests of literature. Neither his public duties, nor his

studies, nor the ruggedness of his character, preserved him from the influence of love. During his stay at Rome, his gallantry and intrigues procured him almost as many enemies as his severity. After the death of Charles V., in a dispute which he had at the Court of Philip II. with one of his rivals, the latter drew a poniard, but Mendoza, seizing his adversary, threw him over a balcony into the street. We are not told whether the consequences of the fall were fatal, but Mendoza was committed to prison. During his captivity the aged minister employed himself in composing love-verses, and complaints: *Redondilhas, estando preso por una pendencia que tuvo en palacio*. Being banished to Grenada, he was an attentive observer of the progress of the Moorish revolt in the Alpuxarra, of which he afterwards wrote an account; a work esteemed one of the masterpieces of Spanish history. He occupied himself during the rest of his life in literary pursuits, and in translating and commenting upon a work of Aristotle. He died at Valladolid in 1575. His library, which he bequeathed to the King, forms one of the most valuable portions of the collection of the Escorial.

The Spanish have placed Mendoza only in the third rank of their poets, Boscan and Garcilaso de la Vega occupying the two first places; because, on a comparison between him and them, they discover considerable harshness in his verses.

Boutterwek, on the other hand, considers his Epistles to be equal to those of Horace. He was the first to give perfect models of this kind of composition to his countrymen. With the exception of two, which are somewhat fatiguing love-complaints, the rest are all didactic; and though full of philosophical discussion, they are yet written in a neat and easy style. The happy mixture of opinion and description preserves them from the charge of monotony. Great correctness of judgment, and a thorough knowledge of the world, form the principal merit of the thoughts. In his Epistle to Boscan he describes domestic life very delightfully. The first verses contain a beautiful picture of the wife of Boscan. We are astonished to discover in the tyrant of Sienna so much delicacy and so much sensibility.*

* Tu la veras, Boscan, y yo la veo,
Que los que amamos, vemos mas temprano,
Hela, en cabello negro y blanco arreo.

Ella te cogera con blanca mano
Las raras ubas, y la fruta cana,
Dulces y frescos dones del verano.

Mira, que diligencia, con què gana
Viene al nuevo servicio, que pomposa
Està con el trabajo, y quan ufana.

En blanca leche colorada rosa
Nunca para su amiga vi al pastor
Mezclar, que pareciesse tan hermosa.

Nor are we less surprised at finding this ferocious man entertaining in the midst of his ambitious career a wish for retirement, and for the happiness and repose of domestic life. In his epistle to Don Luys de Zuñiga he thus expresses himself:

- * Another world I seek, a resting place,
Sweet times and seasons, and a happy home,
Where I in peace may close my mortal race ;
-

El verde arrayan tuerce en derredor,
De tu sagrada frente, con las flores
Mezclando oro immortal a la labor.

Por cima ~~van~~ y vienen los amores,
Con las alas en vino remojadas,
Suenan en el carcax los passadores.

Remedie quien quisiere las pissadas
De los grandes, que el mundo governaron,
Cuyas obras, quiza, estan olvidadas.

Desvelese en lo que ellos no alcançaron,
Duerma descolorido sobre el oro,
Que no les quedara mas que llevaron.

Yo Boscan no procuro otro tesoro
Sino poder vivir medianamente,
Ni escondo la riqueza, ni la adoro.

Si aqui hallas algun inconveniente,
Como discreto y no como yo soy,
Me desengaña luego incontinente ;

Y sino ven con migo adonde voy.

- * Otro mundo es el mio, otro lugar,
Otro tiempo el que busco, y la ocasion
De venirme a mi casa a descansar.

There shall no evil passions dare presume
To enter, turbulence, nor discontent ;
Love to my honour'd king shall there find room ;
And if to me his clemency be sent,
Giving me kindly wherewithal to live,
I will rejoice ; if not, will rest content.
My days shall pass all idly fugitive,
Careless my meals, and at no solemn hour ;
My sleep and dreams such as content can give.
Then will I tell how, in my days of power,
Into the East, Spain's conquering flag I led,
All undismay'd amid the fiery shower ;
While young and old around me throng in dread,
Fair dames, and idle monks, a coward race,
And tremble while they hear of foes that fled.

Yo vivirè la vida sin passion,
Fuera de descontento y turbulencia,
Sirviendo al rey por mi satisfacion.

Si con migo se estiende su clemencia,
Dandome con que viva en medianeza
Holgareme, y sino teré paciencia.

El descanso mezclado con pereza,
El comer descuydado y a su hora,
El dormir sueño libre de tristeza.

Sentiré que, con mano vencedora
Rodea por levante las enseñas
La esquadra, de poniente domadora.

Los niños, las donzellas, y las dueñas,
Los clerigos (cobarde carruage)
Estaran escuchando, hechos peñas.

And haply some ambassador may grace
 My humble roof, resting upon his way ;
 His route and many dangers he will trace
 Upon my frugal board, and much will say
 Of many valiant deeds, but he'll conceal
 His secret purpose from the light of day ;
 To mortal none that object he'll reveal ;
 His secret mission you shall never find,
 Though you should search his heart with pointed steel.

The sonnets of Mendoza are deficient in that grace and harmony which form the charm of Boscan's style. In all of them, however, the language is correct and noble. The following is a very characteristic specimen, as it exhibits the national taste and the prevailing spirit of gallantry, together with some traces of those troubled scenes through which the author had passed.

Vendrà un embaxador de gran linage.
 Por ventura, cansado del camino,
 Y ponerse ha a contar nos el viage.

Pintará las jornadas con el vino
 En la mesa, y diranos sus hazañas :
 Y tendrá muy secreto a lo que viño.

No le podreys sacar con dos mil mañas
 Lo que hombre querria que hablasse,
 Aunque lo escudrineys por las entranas

SONNET.

* Now by the Muses won, I seize my lyre;
 Now roused by valour's stern and manly call,
 I grasp my flaming sword, in storm and fire,
 To plant our banner on some hostile wall:
 Now sink my wearied limbs to silent rest,
 And now I wake and watch the lonely night;
 But thy fair form is on my heart impress'd,
 Through every change, a vision of delight!
 Where'er the glorious planet sheds his beams,
 Whatever lands his golden orb illumines,
 Thy memory ever haunts my blissful dreams,
 And a delightful Eden round me blooms:
 Fresh radiance clothes the earth, the sea, and skies,
 To mark the day that gave thee to mine eyes.

The canzoni partake of the same character. They are blamed for their obscurity; a common defect in Spanish poetry, arising from the too great study bestowed by the writer. Men-

* Aora en la dulce ciencia embevecido,
 Ora en el uso de la ardiente espada,
 Aora con la mano y el sentido
 Puesto en seguir la plaça levantada.
 Ora el pesado cuerpo estè dormido,
 Aora el alma atenta y desvelada;
 Siempre en el coraçon tendre esculpido
 Tu ser, y hermosura entretallada.
 Entre gentes estrañas, do se encierra
 El sol fuera del mundo, y se desvia,
 Duraré y permaneceré deste arte.
 En el mar en el cielo su la tierra
 Contemplaré la gloria de aquel dia
 Que tu vista figura en todo parte.

doza did not confine himself to compositions on the Italian model. The ancient Castilian style attracted his attention, and he endeavoured to carry it to a higher state of polish and perfection. His *redondilhas*, in little stanzas of four verses, his *quintillas*, in stanzas of five verses, and his *villancicos*, are more finished than those of the ancient school, while they are at the same time more suited to his genius than the poems which he has written in the Italian metre. He left many satirical poems under burlesque names, but the Inquisition forbade them to be printed.

Mendoza, however, acquired a higher reputation by his prose compositions, which form an epoch in the history of Spanish literature. The comic romance of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the first of its kind, has been translated into all languages, and read in every nation of Europe. It was corrected and enlarged by the addition of a second part, by a writer named de Luna, who is otherwise unknown; and it is in this altered form that it is now known to the public. The wit of every nation has in it something peculiar, and in *Lazarillo de Tormes* we find the genuine Spanish vein. It seems that the grave dignity of the Castilians would not permit persons of rank to be made the subject of laughter, and the romance-writers therefore chose for their heroes persons insensible to all shame. The humour of these works consisted in contrasting all kinds of ignoble vices with the reserve and dignity of the national

manners. Lazarillo de Tormes is an unfortunate youth, who was born in the bed of a torrent, was educated by the mistress of a negro, and who afterwards became the guide of a blind beggar. He recounts all the tricks and thefts of which he was guilty until he arrived at the high honour of espousing the housekeeper of a clergyman. It is surprising to find Mendoza, still a student at Salamanca, so early and so well acquainted with the vices and manners of the lower orders, and painting beggars and rogues with all the liveliness and satirical power which Fielding only acquired by long experience of the world. The description of Castilian manners which Lazarillo gives us is highly curious, from the period at which it was written. It must be dated about the year 1520, towards the commencement of the reign of Charles V., before the wars in which that monarch engaged, or the *mania* of emigrating to America, had impoverished Castile, and changed its ancient manners; and before that sumptuous parsimony, that stateliness united to extreme poverty, and that proud spirit of idleness which distinguish the Castilians from the Aragonese and the Catalonians, had deprived Castile of its agriculture, its manufactures, and its commerce. Lazarillo is perpetually tormented with hunger, and never receives from his master a sufficiency even of dry bread to satisfy his craving appetite. He is even compelled to employ a thousand artifices to break off the corners of the

loaves, and he then persuades his master that the rats have done the mischief. At length he enters the service of a noble esquire, who passes a portion of the day at church, and the remainder in lounging, arranging his mustachios, and striking his sword against the pavement. Dinner-time, however, never arrives in this gentleman's establishment; and Lazarillo is compelled to support his master by the bread which he has stolen in the streets. He next becomes gentleman-usher to seven ladies at once. The wives of the baker, the shoemaker, the tailor, and the mason, are ashamed of walking the streets and going to mass without an attendant to follow them in respectful style, with a sword by his side. As none of these ladies are able alone to support such an establishment, they arrange the matter amongst themselves; and Lazarillo by turns attends upon them all. Other scenes, no less amusing, follow, all exhibiting the national failing of the Castilians, who are ashamed of their actual condition, and desirous of appearing what they are not, haughtily preferring dependance and misery to the degradation of labour. Numberless romances have been written in imitation of Lazarillo de Tormes. This style of writing has been called by the Spaniards *El Gusto Picaresco*; and if we may believe them, no beggars of any country have ever equalled theirs in artifice, roguery, and subordination to their own private

police, which always acts in opposition to that of society. The romances of *Guzman d'Alfarache*, and of *Picara Justina*, together with many others, have been translated into almost all languages, and were the models of Gil Blas. The father of this large family possessed, without doubt, a large fund of comic talent, since he has found so many imitators. In him we may remark qualities in which his successors have been unable to equal him, a soundness of intellect, a just and solid judgment, together with those profound views of society which indicated that Mendoza was destined for a statesman. Lazarillo de Tormes is the last Spanish work in which the Inquisition is attacked as odious and ridiculous. The Holy-office afterwards acquired the art of making even those whom it was destroying commend its proceedings.

The second work in prose by Mendoza, which was written in his old age, and after he had retired from public life, *The History of the War of Grenada*, has conferred upon him more real fame. Taking Sallust and Tacitus alternately as his models, he may be said to have assumed a station near those colossal authors of antiquity. His style, which is exceedingly elegant, may perhaps occasionally betray the study of the writer; but the simplicity of the narrative is the more remarkable, inasmuch as the art of presenting the subject to the eye of the reader, and of interesting his

feelings, appears almost to be carried to perfection. The statesman appears in almost every page. We immediately perceive that Mendoza was fully aware of the errors of Philip, who by his extreme severity and imprudence drove the Moors into rebellion. He does not, indeed, pronounce any direct opinion, but the reader easily collects it; and so sensible of this was the Spanish government, that the work was not permitted to be printed until the year 1610, thirty-five years after the death of the author, and then not without great alterations. The edition of 1776 alone is complete.

The revolt of the Moors of Grenada, the subject of this history, broke out in the year 1568, in consequence of the cruelties and fanaticism of Philip II. In the preceding reign the public exercise of their religion had been interdicted; and they had been compelled, under pain of death, to make an external profession of Christianity. A fragment from Mendoza respecting the fresh rigours of Philip will enable us to estimate at once the style of the historian, and the policy of the Spanish court. "The Inquisition," says he, "now began to torment them more than had been usual. The King ordered them to abandon the Moorish tongue, and with it all commerce and communication amongst themselves. He deprived them of their negro slaves, whom they treated with the same tenderness as their

own children. He compelled them to throw aside their Arabian habits, in the purchase of which they had spent considerable sums, constraining them to adopt the Castilian dress at a great expense. He forced the women to walk abroad with their faces unveiled, and compelled them to open all their houses which they had been accustomed to keep closed, both which commands appeared an intolerable violence to this jealous nation. It was announced to them also, that the King was desirous of taking from them their children, in order that they might be educated in Castile. They were interdicted from the use of their baths, which were at once necessary and delightful to them; and at the same time their music, their songs, their festivals, all their usual amusements, all their cheerful assemblies, were forbidden. All these new orders were promulgated without any addition to the guards, without despatching any fresh troops, and without any reinforcement of the old, or establishment of new garrisons." The Moors soon began to collect arms and ammunition in the rugged mountains of the Alpuxarra. They chose as their king the young Fernando de Valor, a descendant of their ancient sovereigns, who assumed the name of Aben-Humeya. Grenada was too strong to be surprised; and they had received only very inefficient succours from the Turkish Emperor Selim. Notwithstanding their weakness, they defended

themselves for eight months in the mountains, with unconquerable valour, against a numerous army, commanded by Don John of Austria. The ferocity of the Spaniards displayed itself in a frightful manner during this war. Not only were prisoners without number put to the sword, but the inhabitants of whole villages in the plains, who had taken no part in the insurrection, were massacred on suspicion of holding intelligence with the rebels. Aben-Humeya and his successor Aben-Boo, were both assassinated by Moors, to whom the Spaniards had promised an indemnity at that price. The rest of the inhabitants of the Alpuxarra were sold into slavery, while those of the plains were dragged from their homes, and driven in troops into the interior of Castile, where they perished miserably. Philip, that he might act with perfect justice in this affair, consulted a theologian on the conduct which it behoved him to pursue with regard to the Moors. The latter, whose name was Oradici, answered that "the more enemies he destroyed, the fewer would remain."

The great reform which was wrought in the poetry of Castile, by the example of the Italians, was not without its partizans in Portugal. In this new school, we must grant the first rank to two Portuguese, Miranda and Montemayor, who distinguished themselves by their compositions in both languages. Saa Miranda, who was born in

1494, and died in 1558, may be more especially claimed by the Portuguese; and in treating of the literature of that country, we shall again have occasion to mention him. In Castilian, he wrote only a few pastorals, which resemble Theocritus much more than the pastorals of Garcilaso de la Vega. He was passionately attached to the country, nor could he bear a residence elsewhere. It is evident that he wrote without art, abandoning himself to his feelings, and despising the rules which separate one style of composition from another. His pastorals, therefore, sometimes resemble the Italian canzoni, at others the Latin ode, while they occasionally approach the epic. This mixture of style has drawn down upon him the wrath of the critics, and none of his eclogues are considered as models, though in many of them may be found very beautiful specimens of the various styles of composition. The following lines, from the first eclogue, appear to me to contain that melancholy sensibility which constitutes the chief charm of the Northern poets, but which, with the exception of the Portuguese, is seldom found amongst the writers of the South. *

- * Then fare thee well! for on this earthly scene
The pleasures of to-day, fly ere the morrow,

-
- * Vete, buen Diego, en paz, que en esta tierra
El placer de oy no dura hasta a mañana,

And all is frail and fugitive save sorrow ;
 But in that region, where thou sitt'st serene,
 That vision vain shall meet thine eyes no more
 Which warr'd with thee upon this mortal shore,
 Burning that breast which now lies still and cold.
 What thy clear eyes behold;
 Amid those regions bright,
 Are not the vain shews of a false delight,
 Such as erewhile thou knew'st in this dim bound ;
 But such as aye shed peace and light around ;
 While calm content thy bosom fills,
 Free from the ills
 Which ever in these stranger realms are found.

George de Montemayor was born at Montemor, in Portugal, about the year 1520. As his family was very obscure, he translated into Castilian the name of the village at which he was born, and he assumed it as his own. He had received no education, and served as a common soldier in the Portuguese army. On account of his love of music and his fine voice, he was

Y dura mucho quanto desaplaze.
 Allà aora no ves la vision vana,
 Que acà viviendo te hizo tanta guerra,
 Ardiendo el cuerpo que ora frio yaze.
 Lo que allà satisfaze .
 A tus ya claros ojos,
 No son vanos antojos
 Dé que ay por esto cerros muchedumbre ;
 Mas siempre una paz buena en clara lumbre.
 Contentamiento cierto te acompaña,
 No tanta pesadumbre,
 Como acà va por esta tierra estraña.

attached to the chapel of the infant Don Philip, afterwards Philip II., during his progresses through Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries. He thus became acquainted with the world and the Court, and familiarized himself with the Castilian dialect, which he adopted in preference to the Portuguese. His attachment to Spain was increased by his passion for a beautiful Castilian lady, to whom he has given in his poems the name of Marfida. This Marfida was the divinity of his verses; but upon his return to Spain from a journey on which he had accompanied the Count, he found her married. He now endeavoured to dissipate his chagrin by devoting himself to a romantic composition, in which he represented the faithless fair one as a shepherdess, under the name of Diana, whilst he bestowed upon himself the appellation of Syrenus. This tedious pastoral, which reached the seventh book, ought rather to be considered as a vehicle for the expression of the writer's feelings and for the amatory effusions of his muse, than as a romance. No work in Spain, since the *Amadis*, had been so successful. As the *Amadis* had been the progenitor of a numerous family of chivalric romances, so a crowd of pastoral romances succeeded the *Diana*. Montemayor returned home by the command of the Queen of Portugal; but the rest of his history is unknown. He died a violent death in Spain or in Italy, about the year 1561 or 1562.

The prose writings of Montemayor have more harmony and elegance, and in general more simplicity, than those of his predecessors; nor does he forsake this style of writing, except in his philosophical disquisitions on the nature of love. There, and indeed wherever he attempts to be subtle or profound, he becomes pedantic. It is evident from his admiration of the scholastic rules that he is a novice in them. The grace, harmony, and delicacy of his writings have placed him in the first rank of Spanish poets.

The scene of Montemayor's pastoral is laid at the foot of the mountains of Leon. The period it is more difficult to determine. The geography, the names, and every reference to real manners and customs, are modern. The mythology, however, is pagan. The shepherds and shepherdesses dance together on Sundays; but they invoke Apollo and Diana, the Nymphs and the Fauns. The shepherdess Felismena is brought up by her aunt, the abbess of a nunnery; and her chambermaid, when she is endeavouring to excuse herself, calls upon the name of Jesus. Yet she accounts herself under the protection of the pagan divinities. Venus, who has been irritated against her mother, has condemned her from her birth to be unfortunate in love, while Minerva has endowed her with a most martial spirit, and given her the superiority over the bravest warriors. The adventures of Abindarraes and Xarifa, who were

contemporary with Ferdinand the Catholic, are related as having occurred in early times; but when the heroes visit the court, or meet with any prince, the names which are introduced are entirely fictitious. Indeed the Diana of Montemayor is laid in so poetical a world, and is so far removed from all reality, that it is perfectly useless to notice anachronisms or improbabilities. With regard to the mixture of the ancient mythology with modern fictions, it was the error of the age. Learning, after degenerating into pedantry, had become so intimately connected with the creations of poetry, that it would have been deemed an offence both against taste and imagination, to have deprived the fabulous deities of antiquity of their empire.

Diana was a shepherdess on the borders of the river Ezla, in the kingdom of Leon. She was beloved by two shepherds, Syrenus and Sylvanus; the former of whom possessed her heart, while the suit of the latter had been rejected. These three personages, who were poetical as well as pastoral, all played delightfully upon the harp and the pipe, to which they sang their loves, their hopes, and their resignation. In elegance, beauty, and virtue, they were models for all shepherds. No gross desire ever stained their chaste attachments; no impetuous passions ever overwhelmed the hearts that were filled with tenderness alone. Syrenus, far from feeling towards Sylvanus either

distrust or jealousy, pitied his unfortunate friend, whose sighs were breathed to an inexorable mistress. Sylvanus, on the other hand, found some consolation in his sorrow, when he beheld the happiness of his friend. Syrenus was at length summoned to a distant part of the country, in order to give to the sovereign of the territory an account of the flocks which had been committed to his charge. The despair of the two lovers at this separation was extreme, and they vowed by the most sacred oaths to preserve an eternal fidelity. Scarcely, however, had Syrenus departed, when the parents of Diana compelled her to marry Delio, a rich shepherd of Leon, but little worthy, from his uncouth figure and the dullness of his wit, of being united to the fairest of the shepherdesses. Syrenus returns, and the romance opens with his despairing songs.*

* In order to give some idea of the poetical talents of Montemayor, I have given in this note the first song addressed by Syrenus to a ringlet of Diana's hair, which he wears in his bosom :

Cabellos, quanta mudanza
 Hé visto despues que os vi;
 Y quan mal parece ahi
 Esa color de esperanza.
 Bien pensaba yo, cabellos,
 Aunque con algun temor,
 Que no fuera algun pastor
 Digno de verse cabe ellos.

Ay cabellos, quantos dias
 La mi Diana mirava,
 Si os traya, o si os dexava,
 Y otras cien mil niñerías :
 Y quantas vezes llorando
 (Ay lagrimas engañosas)
 Pedia celos de cosas
 De que yo estava burlando.

Sylvanus seeks Syrenus, and his rival is the first to offer him sympathy and consolation. In fact, Sylvanus, resigning himself to all the pains of despised affection, exhibits both in his conversation and in his verses a degree of submission, a horror of murmuring, and a scrupulosity of love, which are truly extraordinary.

- * Never belov'd, but still to love a slave,
 Still shall I love, though hopeless is my suit ;
 I suffer torments, which I never gave,
 And my unheeded sighs no ear salute ;
 Complaint is sweet, though we no favour have ;
 I reap'd but shame in shunning love's pursuit ;
 Forgetfulness alone I suffer not—
 Alas ! unthought of, can we be forgot ?

Los ojos que me mataban
 Decid, dorados capellos,
 Que culpa tuve en creellos,
 Pues ellos me aseguraban ?
 No visteis vos que algun dia
 Mil lagrimas derramaba,
 Hasta que yo le juraba
 Que sus palabras creia ?

• •
 Quien vido tanta hermosura
 En tan mudable sujeto ?
 Y en amador tan perfetto
 Quien vio tanta desventura ?

O cabellos no os correis
 Por venir de ado venistes,
 Viendome como me visteis,
 En verme como me veis ?

Sobre el arena sentada
 De aquel rio la ví yo
 Do con el dedo escribio ;
 Antes muerta que mudada.
 Mira el amor lo que ordena,
 Que os viene a hacer creer
 Cosas dichas por muger,
 Y escritas en el arena !

- * Amador soy, mas nunca fuy amado,
 Quise bien y querre, no soy querido,
 Fatigas passo, y las hé dado,
 Sospiros di, mas nunca fuy oydo ;

He concludes by saying that he who is not beloved has no right to complain.

Their conversation, together with that of the shepherdess Selvagia, who joins them, makes the reader acquainted with the story. Selvagia, who is a Portuguese shepherdess, in her turn relates her adventures, which, like the former, turn on the torments of love. Her history is remarkable for that confusion, that *intreccio* of attachments, which is peculiarly suited to the taste of the Spaniards, and which is as far removed from nature as it is rich in imagination. The coquetries of both shepherds and shepherdesses have created such a chain of attachments, that Montano loves Selvagia, the latter loves Alanio, Alanio loves Ismenia, and Ismenia loves Montano. This confused love-plot gives rise to an abundance of delicate sentiments and verses, though not without a considerable display of mannerism. At length, deserting her country, where love rendered her too unhappy, Selvagia arrives at the banks of the Elza, where she meets with Syrenus and Sylvanus. She immediately enters into a sentimental discourse with them on coquetry, and on the inconstancy of women and men. These questions of gallantry, the ancient property of the poetical

Quexarme quise, y no fuy escuchado ;
Iluyr quise de amor, quede corrido :
De solo olvido no podre quexarme,
Porque aun no se acordaron de olvidarme.

shepherds, which is now happily lost, are treated of by her in the most profound style. Suddenly, three shepherdesses, who were refreshing themselves at the fountain, are attacked by three clowns who are in love with them, and who have clothed and armed themselves like savages. Syrenus and Sylvanus in vain attempt to rescue them; the combat is too unequal, and indeed their languishing songs do not prepare us to find in them very valorous warriors. The shepherdess Felismena, however, whom Pallas has endowed with unequalled bravery, unexpectedly arrives to succour them. She successively slays all the savages, and restores her companions to liberty. She then relates her adventures with Don Felix de Vandalia, who had conducted her to the court of the Princess Augusta Cesarina. Other shepherdesses are introduced in a similar manner, and we are entertained with the loves of Belisus, and Arsilea; of Abindarraes, one of the Abencerrages of Grenada, and the beautiful Xarifa; and of Danteo and Duarda, two Portuguese, together with the verses which they composed in their own language. The groundwork of many other plots is laid, which the author never finished, though before the conclusion of the seventh book the wishes of several of the lovers are fulfilled. Felicia, who is a shepherdess, and a witch at the same time, influences the hearts of some of the lovers by her potions. Syrenus and

Sylvanus both forget Diana. The latter falls in love with Selvagia, who returns his passion, and they are happily married. Syrenus becomes indifferent to the charms of his former mistress, and Diana, who does not re-appear upon the scene until very late, is seized with a deep melancholy on beholding herself abandoned by him to whose affections she had herself been faithless. Here Montemayor concluded the work. Several persons, amongst whom the most distinguished is Gil Polo, have taken up the *Diana* at this place, and made that shepherdess the heroine of innumerable romances, less rich in adventures than in high-wrought sentiments and in elegant verses.

These, then, are the men who are properly called the classics of Spain; who, during the brilliant reign of Charles V., and in the midst of the disturbances which the ambitious policy of that prince created in Europe, changed the versification, the national taste, and almost the language, of Castile; who gave to the poetry of that country its most graceful, its most elegant, and its most correct form; and who have been the models of all who, from that period, have had any pretensions to classical purity. It is certainly a matter of surprise to find so few traces of a warlike reign in their compositions; to hear them, amidst all the intoxicating excitements of ambition, singing only their sweet pastoral fancies, their tender, their delicate, and their submissive

love. Whilst Europe and America were inundated with blood by the Spaniards, Boscan, Garcilaso, Mendoza, and Montemayor, all of them soldiers, and all of them engaged in the wars which at this period shook the foundations of Christendom, describe themselves as shepherds weaving garlands of flowers, or as lovers tremblingly beseeching the favour of a glance from their mistresses, while they stifle their complaints, suppress all the feelings of nature, and even renounce jealousy, lest it should render them not sufficiently submissive. There is in these verses a Sybaritic softness, a Lydian luxury, which we might expect to meet with in the effeminate Italians, whom servitude has degraded, but which astonishes us in men like the warriors of Charles V.

There exists, undoubtedly, a moral cause for this discordance. If Garcilaso de la Vega and Montemayor have not exhibited their own feelings in their poetry; if they have abandoned the habits, the manners, and the sentiments to which they were accustomed, in search of a poetical world, it was because they were disgusted with the realities around them. Poetry was attempting its first flight, when the Spanish nation lost every thing but the glory of its arms; and even this glory, soiled as it was by so many horrors, and prevented by the severity of discipline from becoming an individual feeling, was voiceless to the heart of the poet.

There was a noble spirit of martial enthusiasm in the ancient poem of the Cid, in the old romances, and in the warlike poems of the Marquis of Santillana; in short, the same inspiration appeared wherever the national honour was concerned. The Grand Master of Calatrava, Don Manuel Ponce de Leon, who in all the Moorish festivals appeared upon the Vega, or plain of Grenada, accompanied by a hundred knights, and after a courteous salutation to the king, offered to contend in single combat with the noblest and bravest of the Saracens, that he might thus contribute by a feat of arms to the pleasures of the day, upheld in these combats the honour of the Castilians; and, indeed, his poetical bravery was a fit subject for romance. In a war which was really national, the rivalry in glory was sufficient to keep alive the ardour of the combatants, while reciprocal esteem was the consequence of the length of the contest. But Garcilaso de la Vega, Mendoza, and their compeers were perfect strangers to the French, the Italians, and the Germans, against whom they marched. The army, of which they formed a part, had already begun to delight in blood, in order that they might supply, by the excitement of ferocity, the absence of national interest. When, therefore, they left the field of battle, they attempted to forget the fierce and cruel feelings which they blushed to acknowledge, and

they cautiously abstained from introducing them into their poems.

The effeminate languor and the luxurious enjoyment of life and love, which peculiarly characterise the Spanish poetry of this age, are discoverable in an equal degree in the Latin and Greek poets who wrote after the extinction of their national liberties. Propertius and Tibullus, as well as Theocritus, sometimes indulge in a degree of languor and tenderness, which often approaches to insipidity. They appear proud of exhibiting their effeminacy, as if for the purpose of demonstrating that they have voluntarily adopted it, and that they have not yielded to it from the influence of fear. The enervated poetry of the Spanish classics was, perhaps, suggested to them by similar motives, and by their desire to preserve the dignity of their character ; but for this very reason the Castilian poetry of the reign of Charles V. was of a transitory nature, and at the highest pitch of its reputation the symptoms of its approaching decay might be distinctly seen.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Spanish Literature of the Sixteenth Century continued.—Herrera ; Ponce de Leon ; Cervantes ; his Don Quixote.

WHEN we consider to what extent genius and talent are individual qualities, and how such qualities are modified by difference of opinion, of character, and of circumstances, we feel surprised at the uniformity in the progress of the human mind, whether we compare with one another the distinguished individuals of the same period, and remark how they all partake of the spirit of the age ; or whether we observe the progressive advance of literature and taste in different nations, and the successive epochs when epic, and lyric, and dramatic poetry have flourished. The reign of Charles V., to which we devoted the last chapter, and with which our attention will be occupied during a portion of the present, was the age of lyric poetry in Castile. That inventive spirit, that love of the marvellous, and that active curiosity which had, in the preceding century, produced so many romances to celebrate the heroes of Spain, and so many chivalrous tales in imitation of the Amadis to astonish the imagina-

tion by super-human exploits, suddenly deserted all the Spanish authors. The art of conceiving new characters, of endowing them with sentiments, of placing them immediately before our eyes, and of giving reality to imaginary incidents, was not yet discovered, for the drama had not yet been introduced. The reign of Charles V. was rich in great poets, but a sameness is observable in them all. Their object was merely to express, in harmonious numbers, the most noble and delicate feelings of the soul. The taste for pastoral poetry, which was adopted by all of them, added still more to this uniformity; for not only did it induce them to confine the action of their poems within stricter bounds, and to indulge only in sentiment, but it even made them reject all sentiment not conformable to the pastoral character. The poets of Spain, during the reign of Charles V., are therefore very indistinctly known, even to those who are best acquainted with the literature of that country. They leave an impression on the mind of an harmonious kind of musing, of an extreme delicacy of sentiment, and of a languid and intoxicating softness; but the thoughts to which they give rise speedily fade from the memory, like the strains of sweet music, which leave no traces on the ear. When once the sounds have ceased and the charm is fled, we in vain attempt to recall them. It would be a difficult task to convey an idea of these

lyric poets in a few desultory translations; and, indeed, I am myself but imperfectly acquainted with them. I have searched for many of them in vain, in the libraries to which I have had access; and were they before me, there would still remain the impossibility of adequately translating them.

It is therefore to historical notices, to a few rapid analyses, and to criticisms, for the most part original, but occasionally borrowed, that we must confine ourselves upon the present occasion, as we have hitherto been compelled to do, until we arrive at the noblest ornaments of Spain, Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Calderon, whose fame belongs to all nations, and whose genius has pierced into every language.

Amongst the lyrical poets of the age of Charles V. there still remain two to be mentioned, whom the people of Castile regard as classical, Herrera and Ponce de Leon. Upon these writers we must not consume much time. Ferdinand de Herrera, who received the surname of the Divine, and who has been placed at the head of the lyric poets of Spain more from party-spirit, than from any just appreciation of his merits, passed his life in obscurity. All that is known of him is, that he was born at Seville about the year 1500, and that after having very fully experienced the power of love, he entered into the church at an advanced age, and died about 1578. Herrera was a poet of vigorous talents, and full of ardour

to launch into a new career in contempt of the critics of his age ; but the new style of composition, which he was so desirous of introducing into Spanish poetry, was modelled in his own mind on a predetermined plan. His expressions are never suggested by his feelings, and in the midst of his greatest beauties we cannot avoid observing the artifice of the poet. His language is extraordinary, and its attempt at elevation renders it often affected. Herrera thought the poetical diction of the Spaniards, even in their best attempts, much too common-place ; it appeared to him to resemble prose too nearly, and to be far beneath the dignity of classical poetry. With these ideas, he attempted to compose a new language. He separated, according to his own conceptions, the noble from the ignoble words ; he changed the signification of some to suit them to poetical purposes ; he used repetitions which seemed to him to give additional energy ; he introduced transpositions more analogous to the genius of the Latin language than of his own ; and he even formed several new words, either by the union of other Spanish words, or by adoption from the Latin. These innovations were considered by the party who patronized Herrera as forming the perfection of true poetry, while at the present day they are rather an object of reproach to him. The real dignity of his language, the harmony of his verse, and the elevation of his ideas, must,

however, be acknowledged. Herrera is the most truly lyrical poet of Spain, as Chiabrera is of Italy; his flight is completely Pindaric, and he soars to the loftiest heights. Perhaps to a genius so rapid and so impetuous as his, the ancient form of the ode, with its short and regular measure, would have been better fitted, than the long stanzas of the Italian canzone which he has adopted, and which are more suited to rounded, harmonious, and somewhat effeminate periods.

Amongst the canzoni of Herrera, those which were composed on the battle of Lepanto must be placed in the first rank. This battle was not only the most glorious victory which the Spanish arms had achieved during that century, but while it promised the most happy consequences in securing the stability of the monarchy at home, and the permanency of its Italian possessions, it fully gratified the religious enthusiasm of the nation. Herrera himself was animated by this feeling, and for once his poetry is the expression of his real sentiments. It breathes a confidence in the protection of the God of armies, a pride in the triumph over such redoubtable enemies, and a hatred of those enemies as poetical as it is unchristian. The language, which is occasionally borrowed from the Old Testament, gives majesty to the verse.*

* El sobervio tirano, confiado
En el grande aparato de sus naves,

An ode of Herrera to Sleep possesses a very different kind of merit; grace of language, a pictorial talent, and great delicacy of composition. Though all these may escape in the translation, the truth of the sentiments must at all events remain.

Que de los nuestros la cerviz cautiva,
Y las manos aviva,
Al ministerio injusto de su estado;
Derribó con los brazos suyos graves
Los cedros mas excelsos de la cima;
Y el arbol, que mas yerto se sublima
Bebió agenas aguas, y atrevido
Piso el vando nuestro y defendido.

Temblaron los perqueños, confundidos
Del impio furor suyo, alzò la frente
Contra tè, señor Dìoz; y con semblante,
Y con pecho arrogante,
Y los armados brazos estendidos,
Movì el ayrado cuello aquel potente:
Cercò su corazon de ardiente saña
Contra las dos Esperias, que el mar baña.
Porque en tí confiadas le resisten,
Y de armas de tu fe y amor se visten.

Dixo aquel insolente y desdeñoso,
No cónocen mis iras estas tierras,
Y de mis padres los ilustres hechos?
O valieron sus pechos,
Contra ellos con el Ungaro medroso,
Y de Dalmacia y Rodas en las guerras?
Quién las pudo librar? Quién de sus manos
Pudo salvar los de Austria y los Germanos?
Podrá su Dios, podra por suerte ahora
Guardallas de mi diestra vencedora.

ODE TO SLEEP.

* Sweet Sleep! that through the starry path of night,
 With dewy poppies crown'd, pursuest thy flight,
 Still'er of human woes!
 That shed'st o'er nature's breast a soft repose;
 Oh! to these distant climates of the West
 Thy slowly wandering pinions turn;
 And with thy influence blest,
 Bathe these love-burthen'd eyes that ever burn
 And find no moment's rest;
 While my unceasing grief
 Refuses all relief!
 O hear my prayer! I ask it by thy love,
 Whom Juno gave thee in the realms above.

Sweet Power, that dost impart
 Gentle oblivion to the suffering heart,
 Beloved sleep, thou only canst bestow.
 A solace for my woe!

* Soave sueño, tú que en tarde buelo,
 Las alas perezosas blandamente
 Bates, de adormideras coronado,
 Por el puro, adormido y vago cielo;
 Ven a la última parte de Occidente,
 Y de licor sagrado
 Baña mis ojos tristes, que cansado,
 Y rendido al furor de mi tormento,*
 No admito algún sosiego;
 Y el dolor desconorta al sufrimiento.
 Ven á mi humilde ruego,
 Ven a mi ruego humilde, o amor de aquella
 Que Juno te ofreció tu ninfa bella.

Divino sueño, gloria de mortales,
 Regalo dulce al misero afligido,
 Sueño amoroso, ven a quien espera

Thrice happy be the hour
 My weary limbs shall feel thy sovereign power !
 Why to these eyes alone deny
 The calm thou pour'st on Nature's boundless reign ?
 'Why let thy votary all neglected die,
 Nor yield a respite to a lover's pain ?
 And must I ask thy balmy aid in vain ?
 Hear, gentle Power, oh hear my humble prayer,
 And let my soul thy heavenly banquet share.

In this extreme of grief, I own thy might ;
 Descend and shed thy healing dew ;
 Descend, and put to flight
 Th' intruding dawn, that with her garish light
 My sorrows would renew.
 'Thou hear'st my sad lament, and in my face
 My many griefs may'st trace !

Cesar del ejercicio de sus males ;
 Y al descanso volver todo el sentido.
 Como sufres que muera
 Lejos de tu poder, quién tuyo era ?
 No es dureza olvidar un solo pecho
 En veladora pena,
 Que sin gozar del bien que al mundo has hecho
 De tu vigor se agena ?
 Ven sueño alegre, sueño ven dichoso,
 Vuelve a mi alma ya, vuelve el reposo.

Sienta yo en tal estrecho tu grandeza ;
 Baxa, y esparce liquido el rocío ;
 Huya la alva, que en torno resplandece ;
 Mira mi ardiente llanto y mi tristeza,
 Y cuánta fuerza tiene el pesar mio,
 Y mi frente humedece,
 Que ya de fuegos juntos el sol crece.

Turn then, sweet wanderer of the night, and spread
 Thy wings around my head ;
 Haste, for th' unwelcome morn
 Is now on her return !
 Let the soft rest the hours of night denied,
 Be by thy lenient hand supplied.

Fresh from my summer bowers,
 A crown of soothing flowers,
 Such as thou lov'st, the fairest and the best,
 I offer thee ; won by their odours sweet
 Th' enamour'd air shall greet
 Thy advent ; oh then, let thy hand
 Express their essence bland,
 And o'er my eye-lids pour delicious rest.
 Enchanting Power ! soft as the breath of Spring
 Be the light gale that steers thy dewy wing ;

Torna, sabroso sueño, y tus hermosas
 Alas suenen ahora ;
 Y huya con sus alas presurosas
 La desabrida aurora ;
 Y lo que en mi faltò la nõche fria,
 Termine la cercana luz del dia.

Una corona, ó sueño, de tus flores
 Ofrezio, tu produce el blando efeto, *
 En los desiertos cercos de mis ojos ;
 Que el ayre entretexido con olores
 Halaga, y ledo mueve en dulce afeto ;
 Y de estos mis enojos
 Destierra, manso sueño, los despojos.
 Ven pues, amado sueño, ven liviano,
 Que del rico oriente
 Despunta el tierno Febo el rayo cano.

Come, ere the sun ascends the purple East,
Come, end my woes ; so, crown'd with heavenly charms,
May fair Pasithea take thee to her arms.

Luis Ponce de Leon is the last of the great poets who rendered illustrious the age of Charles V., and who shed such splendour upon that new epoch of Spanish literature. Differing from those whom we have hitherto noticed, his inspiration is entirely of a religious cast. Indeed, his whole life was consecrated to piety. He was born at Grenada, in 1527, of one of the most illustrious families of Spain, and manifested in his early youth that religious enthusiasm and disposition to retirement, which rendered him indifferent to fame and to worldly pleasures. His heart, which was mild and tender, was never a prey to the dark fanaticism of the monks ; moral and religious contemplations formed his only delight, without inducing a contempt for others, or a spirit of persecution. At sixteen years of age, he entered into the Order of St. Augustine at Salamanca, and applied himself with ardour to theological studies, in which his writings gained him considerable reputation. Poetry was to him a relaxation, while the exquisite sensibility to harmony, which nature had bestowed upon him, and his fine

Ven ya, sueño clemente,
Y acabarà el dolor. Asi te vea
En brazos de tu cara Pasitea.

imagination, were exercised by the study of the classics and of Hebrew poetry. He was cruelly punished for having made a translation of the Song of Solomon. Not that he was supposed to have sought for improper images in that mystical composition, or to have attempted to present in a worldly light the amours of the king of Jerusalem, which he regarded as purely allegorical, but because the Inquisition had prohibited in the strictest manner the translation of any portion of the Bible, without special permission. Ponce de Leon confided his version, under an injunction of secrecy, to a single friend, who indiscreetly shewed it to others. The author was in consequence denounced to the holy office, and immediately cast into prison, where he passed five years separated from human society and deprived of light. Even in this situation, he experienced, in the purity of his conscience and in the strength of his religious principles, that serenity and repose which innocence alone can confer. He was ultimately restored to his dignities, and re-established in his monastery. His talents raised him to the rank of Vicar-general of the province of Salamanca, which he continued to fill until the period of his death in 1591.

No Spaniard, it is said, ever expressed in poetry the intimate sentiments of the heart with a more happy mixture of elegance and of sensibility. He is, without exception, the most correct of all the Spanish writers, and yet the

poetical form which his thoughts assumed, was with him a matter of only secondary consideration. The classical simplicity and dignity of expression, for which the ancient authors, and more especially Horace, whose works he had deeply studied, are remarkable, were the objects of his emulation. His resemblance, however, to Horace was the result of too deep a feeling ever to give him the appearance of an imitator. In his versification he substituted a short rhymed measure for the long stanzas of the canzoni, and by that means also he approached more nearly to the poetry of the ancients. But whilst the compositions of Horace generally breathe only the Epicurean philosophy, those of Ponce de Leon unfold the love of God in mystical verse, and the whole world of moral and religious feelings. The sentiments adopted by Ponce de Leon are so very different from my own, and I have such an imperfect comprehension of religious ecstasies and allegories, that I am unable properly to appreciate the merit which is attributed to him. I shall content myself with giving, in a note, the most celebrated of his odes on the Life of the Blessed. To despoil it of its versification, and of its correct and harmonious language, would be doing an injustice to the poet.*

* Alma region luciente,

* Prado de bien andança, que ni al hielo,
Ni con el rayo ardiente

There are three books of Ponce de Leon's works. The first contains his original composi-

Fallece, fertil suelo,
Producidor eterno de consuelo.

De purpura y de nieve
Florida la cabeça coronado,
A dulces pastos mueve
Sin honda ni cayado
El buen pastor en ti su hato amado.

El va, y empos dichosas
Le siguen sus ovejas, do las pace
Con inmortales rosas,
Con flor que siémpre nace,
Y quanto mas se goza, mas renace.

Y dentro a la montaña
Del alto bien las guia, y en la vena
Del gozo fiel las baña,
Y les da mesa llena,
Pastor y pasto el solo y suerte buena.

Y de su esfera quando
A cùmbre toca altissimo subido
El sol, el sesteando,
De su hato ceñido,
Con dulce son deleyta el santo oido.

Toca el rabel sonoro
Y el inmortal dulçor al alma passa,
Con que invilece el oro,
Y ardiendo se traspassa
Y lança en aquel bien libre de tassa.

tions; the second, his translations from the Classics; the third, his translations of the Psalms and of the book of Job. In these versions his object has been to make the ancients speak as they would have spoken, had they lived at his time and had their language been the Castilian. Pursuing this principle, he was more properly an imitator than a copyist, and has only given an imperfect idea of the ancient authors. His example was generally followed; and all the translations from the ancients into Spanish verse are executed upon the same principle.

These, then, are the celebrated men, who during the reign of Charles V., gave a new character to Castilian poetry. A few others, though of minor reputation, deserve to be mentioned. Fernando d'Acuña made an elegant translation of some portions of Ovid, and has been celebrated for the grace and feeling which he has displayed in his elegies, his sonnets, and his canzonets. Gutiere de

O son, o voz si quiera
Pequeña parte alguna decendiesse
En mi sentido, y fuera
De si el alma pusiesse
Y toda en ti, o amor, la convirtiera.

Conoceria donde
Sesteas dulce esposo, y desatada
Desta prision adonde
Padece, a tu manada
Vivirá junta, sin vagar errada.

Cetina was the first happy imitator of Anacreon in the Spanish language. Pedro de Padilla, a knight of St. James, was the rival of Garcilaso in pastoral poetry; and Gaspar Gil Polo continued the romance of Montemayor, under the name of *Diana enamorada*, with so much talent, that the continuation has been regarded as superior to the work itself, in the brilliancy and polish of the versification.

Although this was the period at which Ariosto had attained the height of his fame, and Italy was inundated with chivalric epics in imitation of the Orlando Furioso, Spain, which still respected and paid serious homage to the spirit of chivalry, never encouraged an imitation of a style so fashionable in the country which she had taken as her model. Ariosto had only been translated into careless and fatiguing prose; and under this disguise, his poem became a mere romance of chivalry. No Castilian poet would have suffered himself to adopt the half-jocular tone of the original. There were during the age of Charles V. many attempts amongst the Spaniards to produce an epic poem, but they all failed. These were the compositions of the king's flatterers, and Charles was invariably their hero. Thus we have a *Carlos Famoso* by Louis Zapata, *Carlos Vitorioso* by Jerome de Urrea, and a *Carolea* by Jerome Samper, all which are now, as they deserve to be, forgotten.

On the other hand, a man of considerable talents, D. Christoval de Castillejo, devoting himself to the ancient style of Spanish poetry, gave the preference to the *redondilhas*, or verses composed of four trochees, over the Italian models. He had travelled to Vienna with Charles V., and in that city he remained as secretary of state to Ferdinand I. His verses exhibit spirit, grace, and ease, together with no small share of humour. But notwithstanding the enthusiastic admiration which those who are attached to the early literature of Spain express for him, he cannot be classed amongst the poets who are celebrated for their creative genius.* Disgusted with the

* As a specimen of the style of this celebrated writer, I have selected the following little song, which appears to me to possess all the grace of Anacreon, with all the gallantry of a Castilian :

Por unas huertas hermosas
 Vagando, muy linda Lida,
 Texio de lyrios, y rosas
 Blancas frescas y olorosas
 Una guirnalda florida;
 Y andando en esta labor,
 Viendo a deshora al amor
 En las rosas escondido,
 Con las que ella ávia texido,
 Le prendio como a traydor.

El muchacho no domado,
 Que nunca penso prenderse,
 Viendose preso y atado,
 Al principio muy ayrado

world, he returned in his old age to Spain, where he died in a monastery, in 1596.

Hitherto the attention of the reader has only been called to the works of poets and of scholars, with whom, however celebrated they may be in their own country, he was probably unacquainted ;

Pugnava por defenderse.
 Y en sus alas estrivando
 Forcejava peleando,
 Y tentava, (aunque desnudo)
 De desatarse del ñudo,
 Para valerse bolando.

Pero viendo la blancura
 Que sus tetas descubrian,
 Como leche fresca y pura,
 Que a su madre en hermosura
 Ventaja no conocian ;
 Y su rostro que encender
 Era bastante, y mover
 Con su mucha loçania
 Los mismos Dioses ; pedia
 Para dexarse vencer.

Buelto a Venus, a la hora
 Hablandole desde alli, " "
 Dixo, madre, Emperadora,
 Desde oy mas, busca señora
 Un nuevo amor para ti.
 Y esta nueva con oylla,
 No te mueva, o dè manzilla ;
 Que aviendo yo de reynar,
 Este es el propio lugar
 En que se ponga mi silla.

but we are now about to introduce one of those individuals whose celebrity is bounded by no language, and by no country, and whose names, not confined to men of learning, to men of taste, or to any one class of society, are spread throughout the world. It will readily be supposed that Miguel Cervantes is here alluded to, the celebrated author of *Don Quixote*. He stands foremost in that band of classic authors who cast such glory on the reigns of the three Philips, during the latter part of the sixteenth, and the commencement of the seventeenth century.

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was born in poverty and obscurity, in 1549, at Alcala de Henares. He assumed the title of *Hidalgo*, or gentleman, but nothing is known of his family or early education. The only circumstance relative to this with which we are acquainted is, that he was sent to a school in Madrid, where he acquired some knowledge of the classics. During this period, he read with extreme avidity all the poets and romance-writers of Spain, and set the highest value, even at this early period of his life, on elegance of diction and on the purity of the Castilian language. He wrote in his youth a number of poems and romances, as well as a pastoral romance entitled *Filena*, which has been lost. The entire want of fortune compelling him to travel in search of a livelihood, which he was unable to find at home, he attached himself to the person of

the Cardinal Aquaviva, with whom he visited Rome. A love of glory and the activity of his mind soon induced him to abandon the servile office which he had accepted from the prelate. He now entered into the army, and served under Marc-Antonio Colonna. He was also present under the banners of Don John of Austria at the battle of Lepanto, where he lost his left hand by a wound from an arquebuss. Being obliged to renounce the profession of arms, probably without having ever risen above the rank of a common soldier, he embarked for Spain; but the vessel in which he was sailing being captured by a Barbary corsair, he was carried to Algiers. He remained there five years and a half in slavery, and was ransomed in 1581.

Thus did Cervantes return to his country, maimed, ruined, and friendless, without prospects, and without resources; but such was the strength of his mind, the liveliness of his temper, and the fire of his imagination, that he not only soon gained the means of livelihood, but acquired a high reputation by his dramatic genius, which he exercised in the composition of comedies and tragedies, all of which were received with loud approbation by the public. It was in the year 1584, and consequently when he was thirty-five years of age, that he published his *Galatea*, and about the same time he gave to the theatre about thirty comedies which have not been preserved. The

rivalry of Lope de Vega, who, about the same period, met with prodigious success, humiliated him a little, and induced him for some time to lay aside his pen. He had married, and he was then, probably, living on the dowry which his wife had brought him. It likewise appears that he obtained at Seville some little office, which preserved him from absolute want, during the life of Philip II. The death of this monarch, in 1598, liberated the minds that had been weighed down by his despotism. Cervantes, who had not appeared before the public for one-and-twenty years, gave to the world, in 1605, the first part of his *Don Quixote*. The success of this work was incredible: thirty thousand copies are said to have been struck off in the author's lifetime. It was translated into all languages, and was loudly praised by all classes of readers. Philip III. himself seeing, from his balcony, a student walking along the banks of the Mançanares, and as he read bursting into involuntary fits of laughter, exclaimed to his courtiers, that the man was mad, unless he was reading *Don Quixote*. Neither Philip III., however, nor any of his courtiers, thought fit to grant any assistance to an indigent author, who was the glory of Spain, and who had written a work so full of comic talent within the walls of a prison, where he was confined for debt.

A contemporary writer, assuming the name of

Avellaneda, undertook a continuation of *Don Quixote*, which he published in 1614, at Saragossa, but this attempt is very inferior to the original. Cervantes was highly indignant at this literary theft. In 1615, he published a second volume of *Don Quixote*, in which he frequently turns into ridicule the Aragonese continuation of his romance; and the Don himself is made to complain of the contemptible impostures which have been circulated to his prejudice. In 1613, his twelve novels appeared; in 1614, his *Journey to Parnassus*; and in 1615, eight comedies and eight interludes, which being rejected by the theatre, were sold to a bookseller for a very inconsiderable sum. He likewise bestowed much time upon a romance which he entitled the *Labours of Persiles and Sigismunda*; but which he was unable to complete in his lifetime. It was published after his death by his widow, Catherine de Salazar, in the year 1617. The preface, which was written a little time before the author's death, exhibits the philosophy and the gaiety and energy of mind which he preserved even in his last moments. The following is an extract from the preface:

“ It happened afterwards, dear reader, that as two of my friends and myself were coming from Esquivias, a place famous for twenty reasons, more especially for its illustrious families and for its excellent wines, I heard a man behind

me whipping his nag with all his might, and seemingly very desirous of overtaking us.' Presently he called out to us, and begged us to stop, which we did ; and when he came up, he turned out to be a country student, dressed in brown, with spatterdashes and round-toed shoes. He had a sword in a huge sheath, and a band tied with tape. He had indeed but two tapes, so that his band got out of its place, which he took great pains to rectify. 'Doubtless,' said he, 'Senors, you are in quest of some office or some prebendal stall at the court of my Lord of Toledo, or from the king, if I may judge from the celerity with which you journey; for, in good truth, my ass has hitherto had the fame of a good trotter, and yet he could not overtake you.' One of my companions answered : 'It is the stout steed of Senor Miguel Cervantes that is the cause of it, for he is very quick in his paces.' Scarcely had the student heard the name of Cervantes, than throwing himself off his ass, whilst his cloak-bag tumbled on one side and his portmanteau on the other, and his hands covered his face, he sprang towards me, and seizing me by the left hand, exclaimed : 'This, then, is the famous one-handed author, the merriest of writers, the favourite of the Muses !' As for me, when I heard him pouring forth all these praises, I thought myself obliged in politeness to answer him ; so embracing his neck, whereby I contrived to pull off his bands

altogether, I said: 'I am indeed Cervantes, Senor, but not the favourite of the Muses, nor any other of those fine things which you have said of me. Pray, sir, mount your ass again, and let us converse together for the small remainder of our journey.' The good student did as I desired. We then drew bit, and proceeded at a more moderate pace. As we rode on, we talked of my illness, but the student gave me little hope, saying: 'It is an hydropsy, which all the water in the ocean, if you could drink it, would not cure; you must drink less, Senor Cervantes, and not neglect to eat, for this alone can cure you.' 'Many other people,' said I, 'have told me the same thing; but it is as impossible for me not to drink, as if I had been born for nothing but drinking. My life is pretty nearly ended, and to judge by the quickness of my pulse, I cannot live longer than next Sunday. You have made acquaintance with me at a very unfortunate time, as I fear that I shall not live to shew my gratitude to you for your obliging conduct.' Such was our conversation when we arrived at the bridge of Toledo, over which I was to pass, while he followed another route by the bridge of Segovia. 'As to my future history, I leave that to the care of fame. My friends will no doubt be very anxious to narrate it, and I should have great pleasure in hearing it.' I embraced him anew, and repeated the offer of my services. He spurred his ass and

left me as ill inclined to prosecute my journey, as he was well disposed to do so. He had, however, supplied my pen with ample materials for pleasantry. But all times are not the same. Perhaps the time may yet arrive when, taking up the thread which I am now compelled to break, I may complete what is now wanting, and what I fain would tell. But, adieu to gaiety, adieu to humour, adieu, my pleasant friends ! I must now die, and I wish for nothing better than speedily to see you well contented in another world."

In the calm gaiety with which Cervantes contemplated his approaching fate, we recognize the soldier who fought so valiantly at Lepanto, and who so firmly supported his five years' captivity in Algiers. A few days afterwards, Cervantes dedicated this work to the Count de Lemos, who, in his old age, had granted him protection and assistance. The dedication is dated the nineteenth of April, 1616. "I could have wished," says he, "not to have been called upon to make so close an application of those ancient verses, which commence with the words: *With foot already in the stirrup*: for with very little alteration I may truly say, that with my foot in the stirrup, and even now experiencing the pains of dissolution, I address to you, Señor, this letter. Yesterday I received extreme unction. To-day I have again taken up my pen ; the time is short; my pains increase ; my hopes diminish ; yet do

I greatly wish that my life might be extended, so that I might again behold you in Spain." The Count de Lemos was then on his road from Naples, and was expected at home. Cervantes died on the twenty-third of April, 1616, aged sixty-seven years, four days after he had written this dedication.

To *Don Quixote* Cervantes owes his immortality. No work of any language ever exhibited a more exquisite or a more sprightly satire, or a happier vein of invention worked with more striking success. Every one has read *Don Quixote*; and, indeed, the work cannot be analysed, or given in fragments. Every one is acquainted with the Knight of La Mancha, who, losing his reason over his books of chivalry, imagines that he lives in the times of Paladins and enchanters; who, resolved to imitate Amadis and Orlando, whose histories he has read with such delight, mounts his lean and ancient steed, braces on his rusty armour, and traverses woods and fields in search of adventures. Every common object is transformed by his poetical imagination. Giants, Paladins, and enchanters, meet him at every step, and all his misfortunes are not sufficient to undeceive him. But the Don, with his faithful Rosinante and his squire Sancho Panza, have already taken their places in our imagination; every one is as well acquainted with them as I am myself. There is nothing left for me to say on their character or history,

and I must, therefore, confine myself to a few observations on the views which the author entertained, and on the spirit which animated him in the composition of this work.

This diverting tissue of laughable and original adventures will, therefore, only furnish us with serious reflections. If we wish to taste all the humour which is afforded by the heroism of the knight, and the terror of the squire, when, in the middle of a dark night, they hear the sound of a fulling-mill, we must read Don Quixote itself. No extract could give any idea of the adventures at the inn, which Don Quixote mistook for an enchanted castle, and where Sancho was tossed in a blanket. It is in the work itself, and there only, that we can enjoy the wit of the fine contrast between the gravity, the measured language, and the manners of Don Quixote, and the ignorance and vulgarity of Sancho. We must leave it to Cervantes alone to sustain both the interest and the humour of his work; to unite the liveliness of imagination, which results from the variety of adventures, with the liveliness of wit, which displays itself in the delineation of character. Those who have read the work itself would not for a moment be contented with an extract; and with regard to those who have not read it, I can only congratulate them on the pleasure which they have yet in store.

The most striking feature in the composition of Don Quixote is the perpetual contrast be-

tween what may be called the poetical and the prosaic spirit. The imagination, the feelings, and all the generous qualities, tend to raise Don Quixote in our esteem. Men of elevated minds make it the object of their lives to defend the weak, to aid the oppressed, to be the champions of justice and innocence. Like Don Quixote, they everywhere discover the image of those virtues which they worship. They believe that disinterestedness, nobility, courage, and chivalry, are still in existence. Without calculating upon their own powers, they expose themselves in the service of the ungrateful, and sacrifice themselves to laws and principles altogether imaginary. The devotion of heroism and the illusions of virtue are the noblest and most affecting themes in the history of the human race. They are the true subjects of the highest species of poetry, which is nothing but the representation of disinterested feelings. A character, however, which excites our admiration, when viewed from an elevated situation, is often ridiculous when seen from the level of the earth. Error is a fertile source of laughter; and a man who sees nothing around him but heroism and chivalry, is certainly sufficiently prone to error. Next to such errors as these, striking contrasts are, perhaps, most productive of risible effects, and nothing can be more powerfully contrasted than poetry and prose; the romance of the imagination, and the petty details of social life; the

valour and the great appetite of the hero; the palace of Armida and an inn; the enchanted princesses and Maritorna.

These considerations may account for the fact, that some persons have considered Don Quixote to be the most melancholy book that was ever written. The groundwork and moral of the romance are, in fact, of a mournful character. Cervantes has, in some degree, exhibited the vanity of noble feelings and the illusions of heroism. He has described in Don Quixote an accomplished man, who is, notwithstanding, the constant object of ridicule; a man, brave beyond all that history can boast of; who affronts the most terrific, not only of mortal, but of supernatural perils; a man whose high sense of honour permits him not to hesitate for a single moment in the accomplishment of his promises, or to deviate in the slightest degree from truth. As disinterested as brave, he combats only for virtue; and when he covets a kingdom, it is only that he may bestow it upon his faithful squire. He is the most constant and most respectful of lovers, the most humane of warriors, the kindest master, the most accomplished of cavaliers. With a taste as refined as his intellect is cultivated, he surpasses in goodness, in loyalty, and in bravery, the Amadis and the Orlandos, whom he has chosen for his models. His most generous enterprises, however, end only in blows and bruises. His love of glory is the bane of those around him. The

giants, with whom he believes he is fighting, are only windmills; the ladies, whom he delivers from enchanters, are harmless women, whom he terrifies upon their journey, and whose servants he maltreats. While he is thus repairing wrongs and redressing injuries, the bachelor, Alonzo Lopez, very properly tells him: "I do not precisely understand your mode of redressing wrongs; but as for myself, you have made me crooked when I was straight enough before, and have broken my leg, which will never be set right all the days of my life; nor do I understand how you repair injuries, for that which I have received from you will never be repaired. It was the most unfortunate adventure that ever happened to me, when I met you in search of adventures."* The conclusion which we draw from the perusal of *Don Quixote* is, that a high degree of enthusiasm is not only prejudicial to the individual who nourishes it, and who is thus resolved to sacrifice himself to others, but that it is equally dangerous to society, the spirit and institutions of which it counteracts and throws into disorder.

Although a work which treated this question seriously and logically, would be as melancholy as degrading to humanity, yet a satire, written without bitterness, may still be a gay and lively production, because it is evident that not only the

* *Don Quixote*, Book iii. c. 19.

author of the ridicule, but those against whom the ridicule is directed, are themselves susceptible of generosity and high feeling. It is amongst such persons that we ought to look for a Don Quixote. There was, in fact, a sort of knight-errantry in the character of Cervantes. It was the love of glory which led him to desert his studies and the enjoyments of life, for the banners of Marc-Antonio Colonna; which prompted him, though never raised above the rank of a common soldier, to rejoice in having lost an arm at the battle of Lepanto, that in his own person he might exhibit a monument of the noblest military achievement in Christendom; which excited, by the hardy bravery which he displayed during his captivity at Algiers, the astonishment and respect of the Moors; and which at last, after he had received extreme unction, and with the knowledge that he could not live until the next Sunday, enabled him to look upon death with that gay indifference, which is manifested in the preface and dedicatory epistle of *Persiles and Sigismunda*. In these latter writings, it appears to me that we may discover a resemblance between himself and the undeceived hero, who becomes conscious of the vanity of glory, and the illusion of that career of ambition, which was always impeded by misfortunes. If it be true that "to ridicule oneself is the highest effort of good taste," we find much in Cervantes to display the ridicule which might

attach even to his most generous attempts. Every enthusiastic mind, like his, readily joins in pleasantry which does not spare the individual himself, nor that which he most loves and respects, if at the same time it does not degrade him.

This primitive idea in the *Don Quixote*, this contrast between the heroic and the vulgar world, and this ridicule of enthusiasm, are not the sole objects which Cervantes had in view. There is another more apparent still, and of more direct application, but which is now entirely forgotten. The literature of Spain, at the period when *Don Quixote* appeared, was overrun with books of chivalry, for the most part miserable compositions, by which the national spirit was misdirected, and its taste corrupted. We have done ample justice in the preceding chapters to the sublimity of that poetical invention in which knight errantry had its origin. This chivalric mythology probably contributed more than any other to impress the imagination with notions of morality and honour, and thus to produce a beneficial effect on the character of modern nations. Love was purified by this spirit of romance, and it is probably to the authors of *Lancelot*, of *Amadis*, and of *Orlando*, that we owe that spirit of gallantry which distinguishes the nations of modern Europe from the people of antiquity, as well as that homage towards women,

and that respect, bordering upon adoration, with which the Greeks were perfectly unacquainted. Briseis, Andromache, and Penelope, humbly and tremblingly resign themselves to the arms of the conqueror, at once his mistress and his slave. Good faith in modern times became the handmaid of force, and dishonour was then, for the first time, attached to falsehood; which, though looked upon as immoral by the ancients, was never considered to be shameful. The sentiment of honour was connected with our very existence; disgrace was rendered worse than death; and to conclude, courage was made a necessary quality, not only to the soldier but to man in every rank of society.

But if the genuine romances of chivalry had so happy an influence on national manners, the imitations of them were no less fatal to the public taste. The imagination, when it has no foundation of reality upon which to rest, and no reference to the congruity of things, is a quality not only frequent, but even vulgar. There have been, it is true, a few nations or a few ages to which it has been denied; but, when it does exist, it is endemic throughout a whole nation. The Spaniards, the Italians, the Provençals, and the Arabians, have all their own peculiar cast of imagination, which is distinguishable in every individual, from the poet to the peasant. If this imagination is not subjected to the restriction of rules, it is astonishing to observe the number and variety of

the extravagancies into which writers are hurried. In the examination of Don Quixote's library, by the Curate and the Barber, they mention many hundred chivalrous romances which Cervantes condemns to the flames. It does not appear that the fault, even of the worst, was that they were destitute of imagination. There was imagination in Esplandian, in the continuation of the Amadis of Gaul, in the Amadis of Greece, and indeed in all the Amadis. There was imagination in Florismart of Hircania, in Palmerin d'Oliva, and in Palmerin of England; for all these books were rich in enchantments and giants and battles, in extraordinary amours and marvellous adventures. In the vast field through which the romance writers might wander without encountering a single obstacle, it was always in their power ^{was} to tread a new path. Many of them, however, did not submit to be guided by nature, who ought to be our mistress even in works of fiction. The consequence is, that we continually meet with causes disproportioned to the effects, characters without unity, incidents without connexion, and a spirit of exaggeration, which, at the first view, seems to be the result of the imagination, but which in fact chills it, and by its absurdity disgusts the reader. There is thus no probability in these compositions; not only not the probability of nature, which we do not look for, but not even the probability of fiction. Even in

prodigies and in fairy-tales, a certain probability must be preservèd, without which miracles cease to be extraordinary and striking.

The facility of inventing these productions, and the certainty of such strange adventures being read, opened the field of literature to a crowd of inferior writers, unacquainted with all that an author ought to know, and more especially with every thing which tends to form a graceful style. The Spaniards, already addicted to far-fetched and antithetical expressions, and imitating in this the taste of the Africans and of the Arabians, passionately devoted themselves to a puerile play upon words, and to that tortured and inflated style which seems to be the result of a diseased imagination, and which, when it is considered to be a perfection, is in the power of the meanest intellects. This is the style which Cervantes touches upon in his *Feliciano de Sylva*: “The reason of the unreasonableness which you impute to my reason so weakens my reason, that it is with reason that I complain of your beauty;” and again: “The high heavens which divinely fortify your divinity by their stars, and which make you merit the mercy which your greatness merits.”

Whilst the fashionable writers thus overthrew all the rules of probability, of taste, and of composition, the multiplicity of the books of chivalry had the worst influence on the feelings and the judgment of the readers. The Spaniards began

to esteem nothing but bombast and inflation, both in conversation and in action. They devoted themselves entirely to the perusal of these empty authors, who fed the imagination without employing any other of the faculties of the soul. History became dull and tiresome when compared with these extravagant fables. They lost that lively sense of truth which distinguishes it wherever it is met with. They were anxious that their historians should mingle in their gravest narratives, and even in the annals of their own country, circumstances only worthy of figuring in an old woman's tale. Of this the General Chronicle of Spain by Francis de Guevara, Bishop of Mondonedo, affords a sufficient instance. The romances of chivalry were, it is true, the inventions of men of an elevated character, and they inspired a taste for noble sentiment; but of all books these are the last to convey any instruction. Strangers as the authors were to the world, it is impossible to apply any of the matter which we there meet with to the concerns of real life, or, if we do so, it is at the risk of violating all propriety and correctness of feeling and opinion.

It was therefore a useful and patriotic design in Cervantes to exhibit, as he has done in *Don Quixote*, the abuse of the books of chivalry, and to overwhelm with ridicule those romances which are the creations of a diseased imagination, giving birth to incidents and characters which could

never have existed. In this attempt Cervantes was completely successful. The romances of chivalry ended with *Don Quixote*. It was in vain for subsequent writers to contend against so witty and ingenious a satire, and to expose themselves to the chance of finding that they had been caricatured even before they made their appearance. It would be very desirable if in every style of composition, after we have once secured the masterpieces, we could thus place a barrier against the crowd of succeeding imitators.

The vigorous talents which Cervantes possessed are powerfully manifested in his comic productions, in which we never find him trespassing against either religion, or law, or morals. The character of Sancho Panza is an admirable contrast to that of his master. The one is full of poetry; the other, of prose. In Sancho are displayed all the qualities of the vulgar; sensuality, gluttony, idleness, cowardice, boasting, egotism, and cunning, all of them mingled with a certain degree of worth, fidelity, and even sensibility. Cervantes was aware that he could not place on the foreground, more especially in a comic romance, an odious character. In spite of all his ridicule, he wishes Sancho as well as Don Quixote to attract the affections of the reader; and though he has invariably placed the two characters in contrast, he has not given virtue to the one and vice

to the other. Whilst the madness of Don Quixote consists in pursuing too far that lofty philosophy which is the offspring of exalted minds, Sancho errs no less in taking for his guide that practical and calculating philosophy on which the proverbs of all nations are founded. Both poetry and prose are thus turned into derision; and if enthusiasm suffers in the person of the knight, egotism does not escape in that of his squire.

The general plot of the Don Quixote, and the chain of incidents which it contains, are absolutely prodigies of wit and imagination. The province of the imagination is to create. If it were admissible to make a profane application of the words of the Evangelist, the imagination represents the things which are not as the things which are; and indeed the objects which have been once presented to us by a powerful imagination, remain impressed upon the memory as though they possessed an actual existence. Their form, their qualities, their habitudes, are so marked out and determined, they have been so clearly exhibited to the eye of the mind, they have so palpably assumed their place in the creation, and they form so distinct a link in the general chain of being, that we could with greater facility deny existence to real objects, than to these creatures of our imagination. Thus Don Quixote and Sancho, the Governante and the Curate, have taken a place in our imaginations from which they can

never be removed. We become familiar with La Mancha and the solitudes of the Sierra Morena. All Spain lies before our eyes. The manners and customs and spirit of its inhabitants are painted in this faithful mirror. We derive a more accurate knowledge of this singular nation from the pages of Don Quixote, than from the narratives and observations of the most inquisitive traveller.

Cervantes, however, did not devote himself to wit alone. If his principal hero was not calculated to excite dramatic interest, he has yet proved by the episodes which he has introduced into his romance, that he was able to excite a livelier interest by the exhibition of tender and passionate sentiments and the ingenious disposition of romantic incidents. The different stories of the shepherdess Marcella, of Cardenio, of the Captive, and of the Curious Impertinent, form almost half the work. These episodes are infinitely varied both in the nature of the incidents, in character, and in language. They may, perhaps, be blamed for some degree of tediousness at the commencement, and for an occasional pedantry in the opening narrative and the dialogue. As soon, however, as the situation of the characters becomes animated, they immediately rise and develop themselves, and the language becomes proportionably pathetic.

The tale of the Curious Impertinent, which is perhaps more faulty than any of the others in its tedious commencement, terminates in the most touching manner.

The style of Cervantes in his *Don Quixote* possesses an inimitable beauty, which no translation can approach. It exhibits the nobleness, the candour, and the simplicity of the ancient romances of chivalry, together with a liveliness of colouring, a precision of expression, and a harmony in its periods, which have never been equalled by any other Spanish writer. The few passages in which Don Quixote harangues his auditors, have gained great celebrity by their oratorical beauty. Such, for example, are his observations on the marvels of the Age of Gold, which he addresses to the shepherds, who are offering him nuts. In this dialogue the language of Don Quixote is lofty and sustained: it has all the pomp and grace of antiquity. His words, like his person, seem always surrounded with cuirass and morion; and this style becomes more amusing when contrasted with the plebeian language of Sancho Panza. He promises the latter the government of an island, which he always denominates, according to the ancient language of the romance writers, *insula*, and not *isla*. Sancho, who repeats this word with much emphasis, does not exactly comprehend its meaning; and the mysterious language which his

master employs raises his expectation in proportion to his ignorance.

The most extensive learning, and an intellect at once various and refined, are exhibited in the *Don Quixote*. It was the casket which Cervantes delighted to store with all his most ingenious thoughts. The art of criticism appears to have occupied a great share of his attention. This observation will apply to many authors; and, indeed, the art of composition is a subject to which every writer ought to devote the most mature reflection. The examination of the library of *Don Quixote* by the Curate, furnishes us with a little treatise on Spanish literature, full of refinement and correct judgment; but this is not the only occasion upon which the subject is introduced. The prologue, and many of the discourses of *Don Quixote*, or of the other characters who are introduced, abound in critical remarks, sometimes serious, sometimes playful, but always correct, novel, and interesting. It was, doubtless, in order to obtain pardon for the severity with which he had treated others, that he was by no means sparing upon himself. In the library of *Don Quixote*, the Curate asks the Barber: "What is the book placed side by side with the *Cancionero* of Maldonado?" "It is the *Galatea* of Miguel Cervantes," said the Barber. "This Cervantes has long been my friend," rejoined the Curate, "and I know he has much more to do with misfortunes than with

poetry. His book does, indeed, display a little power of invention ; it aims at something, but it reaches nothing. We must wait for the second part which he promises (which Cervantes never published) : who knows whether, when it is corrected, the author may not obtain the mercy which we are now compelled to refuse him ?”

Cervantes, three years before his death, wrote another work more immediately devoted to criticism and literary satire : it was a poem in *terza rima*, in eight cantos, of about three hundred verses each, and entitled *A Journey to Parnassus*. Cervantes, tired of his state of poverty, and impatient to obtain the name of a poet, though he asserts that heaven has refused him the requisite talents, departs on foot from Madrid for Carthagea : “ A white loaf, and a few pieces of cheese, which I placed in my wallet, were all my provision for the journey ; a weight not too heavy for a pedestrian traveller. Adieu, said I to my humble habitation ; adieu, Madrid ! Adieu, meadows and fountains, from whence flow nectar and ambrosia ! Adieu, society, where, for one truly happy man, we find a thousand lost pretenders to happiness ! Adieu, agreeable and deceitful residence ! Adieu, theatres, honoured by well-praised ignorance, where day after day a thousand absurdities are repeated !” The poet on his arrival at Carthagea is reminded, by a view of the sea, of the glorious exploits of Don

John of Austria, under whom he had served. While he is seeking for a vessel, he sees a light boat approach, propelled both by sails and oars, to the sound of the most harmonious musical instruments. Mercury, with his winged feet, and his Caduceus in his hand, invites Cervantes in the most flattering manner to embark for Parnassus, whither Apollo has summoned all his faithful poets, to protect himself by their assistance against the invasion of bad taste. At the same time he exhibits to him the extraordinary construction of the vessel, into which he invites him to enter. From prow to poop it is composed entirely of verses, the various styles of which are ingeniously represented by the different purposes to which they are applied. The spars are made of long and melancholy elegies; the mast, of a prolix song; and the other parts of the vessel are formed in a similar manner.

Mercury then presents to Cervantes a long catalogue of Spanish poets, and asks his advice as to the propriety of admitting or rejecting each individual. This question gives Cervantes an opportunity of characterising the contemporary poets in a few brief verses, which at the present day are exceedingly obscure. It is often very difficult to determine whether his praises are ironical or sincere. The poets now arrive by enchantment, and crowd into the vessel, but a violent tempest overtakes them. In the adven-

tures which succeed, the marvellous is mingled with the satirical. The names introduced are all of them of unknown personages, and the production is obscure, and to my apprehension fatiguing. A few passages, indeed, notwithstanding the frequent satirical allusions which are scattered through them, still display many poetical charms. The commencement of the third canto may be cited as an instance :

- Smooth-gliding verses were its oars ; by these
 Impell'd, the royal galley, fast and light,
 Won her clear course o'er unresisting seas.
 The sails were spread to the extremest height
 Of the tall mast. Of the most delicate thought,
 Woven by Love himself, in colours bright,
 The various tissue of those sails was wrought.
 Soft winds upon the poop, with amorous force,
 Breath'd sweetly all, as if they only sought
 To waft that bark on her majestic course.
 The Syrens sport around her, as she holds
 Her rapid voyage through the waters hoarse,

Eran los remos de la real galera
 De esdrujolos, y dellos conpelida
 Se deslizaba por el mar, ligera.

Hasta el tope la vela iba tendida,
 Hecha de muy delgados pensamientos,
 De varios lizos por Amor tegida.

Soplaban dulces y amorosos vientos
 Todos en popa, y todos se mostraban
 Al gran viage solamente atentos.

Which, like some snowy garment's flowing folds,
 Roll to and fro ; and on the expanse of green
 Bright azure tints the dazzled eye beholds.
 Upon the deck the passengers are seen
 In converse. These discuss the arts of verse,
 Arduous and nice ; those sing ; and all between,
 Others the dictates of the muse rehearse.

Cervantes pleads his own cause before Apollo, and sets forth the merits of his different works with a degree of pride which has sometimes been censured. But who will not pardon the proud feeling of conscious superiority, which sustains genius when sinking beneath the pressure of misfortune ? Who will insist upon humility in a man, who, whilst he formed the glory of his age, found himself, in old age and in sickness, exposed to absolute want ? Was it not just that Cervantes, to whom his country had denied all recompense, should appropriate to himself that glory which he felt that he had so truly merited ?

Las sirenas en torno navegaban
 Dando empellones al baxel lozano,
 Con cuya ayuda en vuelo le llevaban.

Semejaban las aguas del mar cano
 Colchas encarrujadas, y hacian
 Azules visos por el verde llano.

Todos los del baxel se entretenian
 Unos glosando pies dificultosos,
 Otros cantaban, otros componian.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

On the Dramas of Cervantes.

THE comic powers which Cervantes had manifested in his *Don Quixote* seemed eminently to qualify him for dramatic attempts. We have already seen that his first literary compositions were of this class ; but, although he had considerable success in this career, he likewise experienced some mortifications. He did not at that time conceive that his dramatic talent was proportioned to the superiority which he afterwards manifested in other branches. Thus, when compared with Lope de Vega, whose fertility is so wonderful, his dramas are but few in number. This might, perhaps, have afforded a reason for commencing our notice of the Spanish Theatre by examining the works of Lope before those of Cervantes, had we not wished to present to the reader, from the mouth of Cervantes himself, a history of the early progress of the dramatic art in Spain. The extract is taken from the preface to his comedies :

“ I must entreat your pardon, dear reader, if you should see me in this prologue a little overstep my accustomed modesty. Some time since I happened to find myself in company with a few friends who were discoursing about comedies, and other matters relating thereto, and they treated this subject with so much subtilty and refinement, that they appeared to me almost to approach perfection. They spoke of the man who was the first in Spain to free the Drama from its swathing-bands, and to clothe it in pomp and magnificence. As the oldest of the company, I remarked that I had frequently heard the great Lope de Rueda recite, a man equally celebrated as an actor and a scholar. He was born at Seville, and was by trade a gold-beater. As a pastoral poet he had great merit ; and, in that species of composition, no one, either before or since his time, has surpassed him. Although I could not judge of the excellence of his poems, for I was then but a child, yet some of them still remain in my memory ; and recalling these at a riper age, they appear to me to be worthy of their reputation. In the time of this celebrated Spaniard, all the apparatus of a dramatist and a manager was contained in a bag, and consisted of four white cloaks, bordered with gilt leather, for shepherds, four beards and wigs, and four crooks, more or less. The dramas were mere dialogues, or eclogues between two or three shepherds and a

shepherdess; and these conversations were enlivened and prolonged by two or three interludes, in which negresses were introduced as confidantes, or go-betweens; and, occasionally, some clowns and Biscayans made their appearance. At this time there was no scenery; no combats between Moors and Christians, on horseback and on foot; no trap-doors, by which figures might appear to rise from the centre of the earth. The stage was merely composed of four square blocks of wood, upon which rested five or six planks, so as to elevate the actors a foot or two above the ground. No angels or spirits descended in clouds from heaven. The sole ornament of the theatre was an old curtain, supported at both ends by strings, which separated the dressing-room from the audience. At the back were placed the musicians, who sang without any guitar some ancient ballad. Lope de Rueda at last died, and, on account of his celebrity and excellence, was buried between the two choirs in the great church at Cordova, where he died, in the same place where that renowned madman Luis Lopez is interred. Naharro, a native of Toledo, succeeded Lope de Rueda. He attained great celebrity, more especially in his representation of a meddling poltroon. Naharro added something to the scenic decorations, and changed the bag, in which the wardrobe was contained, for trunks and portmanteaus. He introduced the music upon the

stage, which had been formerly placed in the background, and he took away the beards from the actors; for until his time no actor ever appeared without a false beard. He wished all his actors to appear undisguised, with the exception of those who represented old men or changed their characters. He invented scenes, clouds, thunder, lightning, challenges, and combats; but nothing of this kind was carried to the perfection which at this day we behold, (and it is here that I must trespass upon my modesty,) until the time when the theatre of Madrid exhibited the *Captives of Algiers*, which is my own composition, *Numantia*, and the *Naval Engagement*. It was there that I made an attempt to reduce the comedies of five acts into three. I was the first to represent the phantoms of the imagination, and the hidden thoughts of the soul, by introducing figures of them upon the stage, with the universal applause of the spectators. I composed during this period from twenty to thirty dramas, all of which were represented without a single cucumber or orange, or any other missile usually aimed at bad comedians, being thrown at the actors. They proceeded through their parts without hisses, without confusion, and without clamour. I was at length occupied with other matters, and I laid down my pen, and forsook the drama. In the mean time appeared that prodigy, Lope de Vega, who immediately assumed the dramatic crown. He

reduced under his dominion all the farce-writers, and filled the world with excellent and well-contrived comedies, of which he wrote so many, that they could not be comprised in ten thousand pages. What is no less surprising, he himself saw them all represented, or was credibly assured that they had been so. All his rivals together have not written a moiety of what he himself achieved alone. Notwithstanding this, as God grants not all things to every one, the labours of Doctor Ramon, who was the most laborious writer after the great Lope, have been much esteemed. The ingenious plots of the licentiate Miguel Sanchez, and the gravity of Doctor Mira de Mescua, have likewise met with applause, which has also been granted to the wisdom and prodigious power of invention of the Canon Tarraga, to the sweetness of Guillen de Castro, to the refinement of Aguilar, to the sonorous pomp and grandeur of the comedies of Luis Velez de Guevara, to the polished wit of D. Antonio de Galarza, whose dramas are written in a provincial dialect; and, lastly, to the love-plots of Gaspard d'Avila; for these, as well as some others, assisted the great Lope in the creation of the Spanish drama."

Such, then, was the first age of the Spanish theatre, and, if we may believe Schlegel and Boutterwek, dramatic poetry never assumed in Spain more than two different characters. They

consider the first age, that of Cervantes and Lope de Vega, as one of barbarian grandeur; the second, that of Calderon, as the perfection of romance. They scarcely concede the title of poets to those writers, who in the last century abandoned the example of their predecessors to become subject to the theatrical laws of the French. I do not share in the admiration which the German critics profess for the romantic theatre of Spain; while, on the other hand, I am not inclined to despise a branch of literature to which we owe the great Corneille. As it is my object rather to enable the reader to judge for himself, than to offer my own opinions, I shall present such extracts from Cervantes, from Lope de Vega, and from Calderon, as will afford some idea of their respective merits and defects.

The fragment of Cervantes, which we have just translated, represents the Spanish drama as still in a state of uncultivated barbarism, even after the middle of the sixteenth century. If we compare these pastoral dialogues, diversified with indecent interludes, with the comedies of Ariosto and Machiavelli, or with the tragedies of Trissino and Rucellai, it must be acknowledged that the Italians were at least half a century before the Spaniards in all the mechanical parts of the dramatic art. In Italy, indeed, it must be remembered that men of the highest genius, seconded by the munificence of their princes, attempted to re-

vive the dramatic representations of the ancients; whilst, in Spain, mountebanks and pretenders composed and recited their own dramas, frequently without committing them to writing, and without any other object than that of amusing the populace, and rendering the representation a source of profit to themselves. Cervantes himself could not accurately tell whether he had written twenty or thirty comedies. Those published by him in his old age are not the same which were represented on the stage, which, with the exception of two, have been lost. This very dissimilar origin has impressed an indelible character on the drama of the two countries. The Italian dramatists wrote to please the learned; the Spanish, to please the people. The former, influenced by an imitation of the ancients, while they possessed more method, refinement, and taste, manifested something of a pedantic spirit, and servilely adopted the rules of composition by which the ancients were governed. The latter, on the contrary, recognized no rule but that of conforming themselves to the spirit of the nation and to the taste of the populace. Their dramas, therefore, exhibited more vigour and more nature, and were more in harmony with the spirit of the people for whom they were composed, than the productions of the Italian dramatists. By their absolute neglect, however, of the ancients, these

writers deprived themselves of all the advantages of experience, and the dramatic art amongst them was, consequently, as inferior to that of the Greeks, as the population of Madrid and Seville, from whom the laws of the drama emanated, were inferior in point of intelligence, taste, and polish, to the people of Athens, where every citizen received some degree of education.

The conclusion of the sixteenth and the commencement of the seventeenth century was a very learned epoch. The Spanish scholars of this period, becoming disciples of the classical authors, upheld with as much fervor as La Harpe and Marmontel, amongst the French, the poetical system of Aristotle and the rules of the three unities. The dramatic writers, while they recognized the authority of these rules, neglected to act upon them, for they were compelled to follow the taste of the public. None of them were acquainted with the nature of the independence which they possessed, or of that system of romantic poetry which has been only in our own days developed by the Germans. On the contrary, the Spanish dramatists confessed in a curious manner the superiority of the laws which they neglected. Lope de Vega, in some verses addressed to the Academy of Poetry at Madrid, exculpates himself from this charge in the following manner :

* I write a play ! Then, ere I pen a line,
 Under six locks and keys let me confine
 All rules of art—Next, Plautus ! 'tis thy doom,
 And, Terence, thine, to quit forthwith the room,
 Lest ye upbraid me.—Books can speak, though dumb,
 And tell unwelcome truths. By other laws
 I write, laid down by those who seek applause
 From vulgar mouths ; what then ? the vulgar pay ;
 They love a fool—and let them have their way.

Cervantes in the first part of his *Don Quixote* (ch. xlviii.) introduces a canon of Toledo, who, after blaming the Spaniards with some asperity for having perpetually violated the laws of the dramatic art, regrets that the government has not established a censor for the drama, who might have power to prevent the representation of pieces, not only when they are injurious to morals, but likewise when they offend against the laws of classical poetry. The censor would be sufficiently ridiculous who should maintain upon the stage the three unities of Aristotle; and those authors have

* Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo de hacer Comedias en este tiempo* :

Y quando hé de escribir una comedia
 Encierro los preceptos con seis llaves ;
 Saco a Terencio y Plauto de mi estudio,
 Para que no me den voces, que suele
 Dar gridos la verdad an libros mudos ;
 Y escribo por el arte que inventaron
 Los que el vulgar aplauso pretendieron ;
 Por que como las paga el vulgo, es justo
 Hablarle en necio, para darle gusto.

a strange idea of authority who imagine that a censor must possess a more just and correct taste than the public, and that a king can bestow upon his favourite the power of discriminating between the good and the bad in literature, while the academies of the learned, and the assemblies of the ignorant, have not yet been able to agree on the subject of abstract beauty and excellence.

If the magistrate thus proposed by Cervantes had been instituted, and had he been, though it be a most improbable supposition, inaccessible to intrigue, to favour, and to prejudice, he would in all probability have forbidden the representation of the dramas of Cervantes, since they are by no means constructed upon those classical rules, the neglect of which the poet so deeply regrets. The tragedy of *Numantia* and the comedy of *Life in Algiers*, which we are about to analyse, are the only two which have been preserved out of twenty or thirty dramas, written in 1582, soon after the author's release from captivity. Those which he published in 1615 were never represented, and therefore merit less attention; though it is from the preface to the latter that we have drawn the history of the dramatic art already presented to the reader. When Cervantes speaks of this work of his old age, his simplicity and gaiety have in them something touching, for it is evident that he was suffering an inward mortification, more severe in propor-

tion as his poverty rendered success desirable to him.

“Some years since,” says he, “I returned to the ancient occupation of my leisure hours; and imagining that the age had not passed away in which I used to hear the sound of praise, I again began to write comedies. The birds, however, had flown from their nest. I could find no manager to ask for my plays, though they knew that I had written them. I threw them, therefore, into the corner of a trunk, and condemned them to eternal obscurity. A bookseller then told me, that he would have bought them from me had he not been told by a celebrated author that much dependance might be placed upon my prose, but none upon my poetry. To say the truth, this information mortified me much. I said to myself: Certainly, I am either changed, or the world, contrary to its custom, has become much wiser, for in past time I used to meet with praise. I read my comedies anew, together with some interludes which I had placed with them. I found that they were not so bad but that they might pass from what this author called darkness into what others may perhaps term noon-day. I was angry, and sold them to the bookseller who has now printed them. They have paid me tolerably, and I have pocketed my money with pleasure, and without troubling myself about the opinions of the actors. I was willing to make them as excellent as I could; and if, dear reader, thou

findest any thing good in them, I pray thee, when thou meetest any other calumniator, to tell him to amend his manners, and not to judge so severely, since, after all, the plays contain not any incongruities or striking faults."

I must beg the same kind indulgence towards the dramas of Cervantes, which the author himself entreated from his readers. In order to be just towards him we must commence by rejecting all our theatrical prepossessions; remembering that he wrote before any of those authors whom we regard as the legislators of the drama, upon a different system, and with another object in view. Let us consider his dramas as a series of pictures, all connected by the chain of historical interest, though varying in subject. In some he has endeavoured to excite the noblest sentiments of the heart: in his *Numantia*, patriotism; in his *Life in Algiers*, zeal for the redemption of captives. Such are the only unities for which we must seek in his dramas. Let us abandon ourselves to his eloquence, without endeavouring to resist the feelings of terror or of pity which he seeks to awake; and let us forget, if it be in our power, those rules which our own dramatists obey, but which to him are entirely inapplicable. When we analyse even the models of antiquity, we do not apply to all of them rules equally severe. We do not forget that Æschylus, like Cervantes, was in the van of his art. Perhaps, if we compared the *Numantia* with the *Persians*, or

with the Prometheus, many points of resemblance between these two celebrated authors would strike us. We should probably find, that, in the grandeur of the incidents, in the depth of feeling, in the nature and language of the allegorical personages introduced upon the stage, and lastly in the patriotic sentiments of the compositions, the oldest of the Spanish dramatists has approached nearer to the most ancient of the Greek tragedians, than any voluntary imitation could have accomplished.

There is a strong feeling of patriotism manifested by Cervantes in his Numantia. He has taken as the subject of his tragedy, the destruction of a city which valiantly opposed the Romans, and whose inhabitants, rather than surrender themselves to the enemy, preferred perishing beneath the ruins of their homes, slaughtering one another, and precipitating themselves into the flames. This terrible subject is not one which would be considered, at the present day, as suitable to the purposes of the drama. It is too extensive, too public, too little adapted to the display of individual passions, and of those motives which operate upon persons and not upon nations. A certain degree of admiration, however, cannot be refused to this poetical attempt of Cervantes, which seems like an expiatory sacrifice offered up to the manes of a great city.

The tragedy opens with a dialogue between Scipio and Jugurtha. This scene, like the greatest

part of the drama, is written in octave stanzas of the heroic Italian verse. In a few scenes only, in which the dialogue is more lively, is the Spanish *Redondilha* of four trochees, rhymed in quatrains, employed. Cervantes has never made use of the assonants, which by later writers were almost constantly adopted for the dialogues.

Scipio declares to Jugurtha the repugnance which he feels to continue a war, which has already cost the Roman people so much blood, and in which he has at the same time to contend against the obstinate valour of the enemy, and the want of discipline which his own army betrays. He then gives orders for all the troops to be assembled, that by haranguing them he may recall them to a sense of their duty. The novelty of these dramatic representations is curiously manifested in the stage directions, which Cervantes has added to his dramas. Thus, in one scene it is said: "Here enter as many soldiers as the stage will hold, and Caius Marius with them: they must be armed in the ancient fashion, without musquets. Scipio, ascending a little rock upon the stage, gazes on the soldiery before he addresses them." The speech of Scipio is too long to be given entire, and indeed too long for representation. It is, however, full of elevated feeling and of martial eloquence. He thus commences:

Well, by your pride of feature, noble friends,
And splendour of your martial decorations,
I recognize in you the sons of Rome,

Yea, brave and valiant sons ! But, by your hands,
Fair and effeminate, by the glossy shew
Of your smooth faces, rather should I deem you
Of Britain born, or Belgium. You yourselves,
By your neglect, your reckless disregard
Of all your duties, you yourselves have raised
Your foe, already vanquish'd, from the ground,
And wrong'd at once your valour and your fame.
Behold these walls, that yet unshaken stand
Firm as the rocks on which they rest ! These walls
Bear shameful witness to your weak attempts,
That boast of nothing Roman but the name.
What ! when the whole world trembles and bows down
Before the name of Rome, will you alone
Betray her claims to empire, and eclipse
Her universal glory here in Spain ?

Scipio then directs various reforms. He orders the women to be removed, and that nothing shall be introduced into the army which can be productive of luxury and effeminacy ; and he then expresses his confidence that, as soon as discipline is re-established within the camp, it will be an easy task to vanquish the handful of Spaniards who have shut themselves up within the walls of Numantia. Caius Marius answers in the name of the rest, and promises that the soldiers shall shew themselves true Romans, and submit cheerfully to the most rigorous discipline.

Two Numantian ambassadors now present themselves before the general and the army. They declare that it was to the severity, avarice, and injustice of the generals who had hitherto

commanded in Spain, that the revolt of Numantia was owing; that the arrival of Scipio, with whose virtues they are acquainted, and in whom they place the fullest confidence, had now induced them to sue as ardently for peace as they had before courageously sustained the war. Scipio, however, demands a higher satisfaction for the insults offered to the majesty of the Roman people. He refuses all overtures for peace, and dismisses the ambassadors with an exhortation to look well to their defence. He then informs his brother, that, instead of exposing his army in fresh engagements, and moistening the soil of Spain with Roman blood, he has determined to surround Numantia with a deep fosse, and to reduce the place by famine. He therefore orders the army to commence the circumvallations.

In the second scene (and between each scene some time is supposed to have elapsed,) Spain is introduced in the figure of a woman, crowned with towers, and bearing in her hand a castle, as a symbol of those castles from which are derived the name and arms of Castile. She invokes the mercy and favour of heaven, and complains bitterly of her state of perpetual bondage. She has seen her riches alternately the prey of the Phœnician and of the Greek; and her most valiant sons divided amongst themselves, combating with one another, when they should

have united their arms against the common enemy.

Numantia only, careless of her blood,
Has dared to draw her shining sword, and strike
For that old liberty she long has cherish'd.
But now, oh grief! her time of doom is near ;
Her fatal hour approaches, and her life
Is waning to its close ; but her bright fame
Shall still survive, and, like the Phoenix, burst
More glorious from her ashes.

The circumvallation being now accomplished, the Numantians have to contend against hunger, without any opportunity of engaging with the enemy. One side of the city is washed by the Douro, and the Spaniards therefore address themselves to that river, beseeching him to favour the people of Numantia, and to swell his waters, so as to prevent the Romans from erecting towers and machines on its banks. The Douro, followed by three tributary streams, advances upon the stage, and declares that he has made the greatest efforts to remove the Romans from the walls of Numantia, but in vain; that the fatal hour is arrived, and that the only consolation he has left is derived from Proteus, who has revealed to him the future glories reserved for the Spaniards, and the humiliations to which the Romans are destined. He predicts the victories of Attila and the conquests of the Goths, which are to renovate Spain; the title of "Most Catholic" which will be bestowed upon her kings;

and lastly, the glory of Philip II. who will unite the territories of Portugal to the two kingdoms of Spain.

In the second act the Numantians are seen assembled in council. Theogenes enquires from his countrymen by what means they can escape from the cruel vengeance of their enemies, who, without daring to combat with them, have reduced them to perish by hunger. Corabino proposes that an offer shall be made to the Romans to decide the fate of the two nations by single combat, and that if this is refused, they should try the effect of a sortie through the fosse, and attempt to open a passage through the enemy. Others present support this proposition, and at the same time describe their despair and the sufferings which they endure from famine. They likewise propose sacrifices to appease the gods, and auguries to ascertain their wishes.

The scenes in the dramas of Cervantes are as distinct as the acts. They seem intended in the Numantia to exhibit the sentiments and ideas of a whole people, under the various aspects of public affairs. To accomplish this design we are sometimes introduced into the assemblies of the nobles; at others, simple citizens appear upon the stage, and occasionally allegorical personages come forward. The second scene of this act is between two Numantian soldiers, Morandro and Leoncio; the former, the lover of Lira, a young

damsel of Numantia, was on the eve of marriage, when the nuptials were deferred on account of the war and the public misfortunes. Leoncio accuses him of forgetting, in his passion for his mistress, the dangers of his country. Morandro thus replies :

Never did love teach lover cowardice :
Have I e'er been a truant from my post
To visit her I love ? Have I e'er closed
My eyes in slumber when my captain watch'd ?
Have I e'er fail'd when duty call'd on me,
Because my heart was fill'd with her sweet image ?
If, then, these things be not objected to me,
Why will you blame me for my passionate love ?

The dialogue is interrupted by the arrival of the people and the priests, with the victim and the incense for the sacrifice to Jupiter. As the priests proceed in the sacrificial ceremonies, the most terrible presages present themselves. The torches will not light ; the smoke curls towards the West, and the invocations are answered with thunder. It is curious to remark the expedients by which the author proposes to imitate thunder : " Here," says he, " a noise must be made by rolling a barrel full of stones, and fire-works must be let off." In the air, eagles are seen pouncing upon vultures, and tearing them in their talons. At last the victim is carried away by an infernal spirit, at the moment when it is about to be slain.

Marquino, a magician, then endeavours in his turn to discover the will of heaven by enchantment. He approaches a tomb where, three hours previously, a young Numantian had been buried who had died of hunger, and he invokes his spirit from the infernal regions. His address to the spirits of darkness is singularly poetical. He speaks in that commanding style, and at the same time with that contempt and anger, with which the poets have gifted those magicians who have not allowed themselves to become the slaves of Lucifer. The tomb opens; the dead rises, but moves not. Marquino by fresh enchantment bestows animation, and compels the body to speak. The corpse announces that Numantia will neither be the conquered, nor the conqueror; but that her citizens shall destroy one another. The corpse then sinks again into the tomb, and Marquino in despair stabs himself, and falls into the same grave.

The third act again leads us into the Roman camp. Scipio congratulates himself on having reduced Numantia to the last extremity, without finding it necessary to expose his soldiers. In the mean time a solitary trumpet is heard from within the walls. Corabino then appears with a white flag in his hand. He proposes to terminate the quarrel by single combat, on condition that if the Numantian champion is vanquished,

the gates of the city shall be opened ; if, on the contrary, the Roman combatant is overcome, that the siege shall be raised. At the same time he flatters the Romans, by assuring them that from the valour of their champions, they may count upon a victory. Scipio rejects with ridicule a proposal which would place him on equal terms with the enemy, at a time when he is assured of the conquest.

Corabino, left alone on the walls, overwhelms the Romans with vituperation. They, however, hear him not, and he retires. The next scene represents the interior of Numantia. The council of war is assembled, and Theogenes having given an account of the failure of the sacrifices, of the enchantments, and of the challenge, proposes again to make a sally. The warriors dread the opposition of their wives, whom they will be compelled to abandon. The women, informed of the proposed sortie, crowd around the council-chamber with their infants in their arms, and each, in eloquent language, demands to share the fortunes of her husband :

* What is it that you wish, brave warriors ?
Have, then, your sorrowful fancies work'd on you
To fly us and forsake us ? Do ye think

* Que pensais, varones claros ?
Revolveis aun todavia
En la triste fantasia

To leave the virgins of Numantia
 A spoil to arrogant Romans, and your sons,
 Your free-born sons, in bondage to the foe?
 Were it not better that your own right hand
 At once should take the life which ye have given?
 Would you, then, feed the Roman avarice?
 Would you, then, suffer them in unjust pride
 To triumph o'er us, while with foreign hands
 They pillage all our mansions?

* * * * *

If you are well resolved to attempt the sortie,
 Then take us with you. It will be life to us
 To perish by your sides. Nor will ye thus

De dexarnos y ausentarnos?
 Quereis dexar, por ventura
 A la Romana arrogancia
 Las virgines de Numancia
 Para mayor desventura?
 Ya los libres hijos nuestros
 Quereis esclavos dexallos?
 No será mejor ahogallos
 Con los propios brazos vuestros?
 Quereis hartar el deseo
 De la romana codicia,
 Y que triunfe su injusticia
 De nuestro justo trofeo?
 Serán por agenas manos
 Nuestras casas derribadas;

* * * * *

Si al foro quereis salir,
 Llevadnos en tal salida;
 Porque tendremos por vida
 A vuestros lados morir.

Shorten our way to death, for famine ever
Threatens to cut the thread of life in twain.

Another woman then presents her children to the senators of Numantia, and thus speaks :

Oh, children of most desolate mothers, why,
Why speak ye not, and why with moving tears
Do ye not supplicate your cruel sires
Not to desert you? Doth it not suffice
That terrible famine should oppress your lives,
But must you also prove the bitterness
Of Roman rigour? Tell them that ye were
Begotten free, free born, and that your mothers,
Your wretched mothers, nurs'd you still in freedom:
And tell them, if our fate so adverse is,
They who have given you life should take it back.
O walls! if ye can speak, exclaim aloud,
A thousand times repeat, " Numantians!
Numantians! Liberty!"*

No apresureis el camino
Al morir, porque su estambre
Cuidado tiene la hambre
De cercenarlo continuo.

* Hijos destas tristes mãdres
Qué es esto? Como no hablais?
Y con lagrimas rogaís
Que no os dexten vuestros padres?
Basta que la hambre insana
Os acabe con dolor,
Sin esperar el rigor
De la aspereza romana.

After several of the women have spoken, Theogenes answers their complaints with great tenderness. He swears that they shall not be abandoned by their husbands, but that living or dying they shall still be protected. Lastly, he endeavours to persuade the Numantians to adopt a still more desperate course, and not to leave within the walls of Numantia a single relic of their persons or their property to adorn the triumphs of the enemy. He proposes that in the middle of the great square of the city a pile should be raised, upon which the citizens should themselves cast all their riches, and that to mitigate for a few hours at least the hunger which consumes them, the Roman prisoners should be slain, and eaten by the soldiery. The people immediately adopt this frightful resolution, and separate in order to put it into execution. Morandro and Lira remain alone upon the stage, and a terrific scene of love,

Decildes que os engendraron
Libres, y libres nacistes;
Y que vuestras madres tristes
Tambien libres os criaron.
Decildes que pues la suerte
Nuestra va tan de caida,
Que como os dieron la vida
Ansi mismo os den la muerte.
O muros desta ciudad,
Si podeis hablad, decid,
Y mil veces repetid
Numantinos libertad!

struggling with famine, succeeds. Lira, to the passionate exclamations of her lover, only answers that her brother had died of hunger the preceding day, that on that very day her mother had perished, and that she herself is on the verge of death. Morandro determines to penetrate into the Roman camp in search of food to prolong the life of his mistress. Leoncio, his friend, notwithstanding his remonstrances, resolves to accompany him, and the two friends wait till the obscurity of night shall afford them an opportunity to make their attempt.

Two citizens now announce that the pile is lighted, and that the inhabitants are eagerly heaping upon it all the remains of their property. Men, loaded with burthens of rich and precious articles, are seen passing over the stage towards the pile. One of the Numantians then declares that as soon as their riches are consumed, the women, the children, and the old men, will be all massacred by the soldiery, to save them from the conquerors. A Numantian mother is then introduced, leading by the hand her little son, who bears a valuable packet. She holds an infant at her breast :

* MOTHER. Oh life, most cruel and most hard to bear !
Oh agony, most deep and terrible !

* MADRE. O duro vivir molesto !
Terrible y triste agonía !

- Boy. Mother ! will no one give a little morsel
Of bread, for all these riches ?
- MOTHER. No, my son !
No bread, nor aught to nourish thee, my child.
- Boy. Must I then die of hunger ? mother, mother,
I ask one morsel only, nothing more.
- MOTHER. My child, what pain thou giv'st me !
- Boy. Do you not
Wish for it, then ?
- MOTHER. I wish for it, but know not
Where I may seek it.
- Boy. Why not buy it, mother ?
If not, I'll buy it for myself, and give
To the first man I meet, even all these riches—
Ay, for one single morsel of dry bread,
My hunger pains me so.
- MOTHER (*to her infant*). And thou, poor creature,

Hijo. Madre por ventura habria
Quien nos diese pan por esto ?

MADRE. Pan, Hijo, ni aun otra cosa
Que semeje de comer !

Hijo. Pues tengo de perecer
De dura hambre rabiosa ?
Con poco pan que me deis.
Madre no os pediré mas.

MADRE. Hijo, qué penas me das !

Hijo. Pues, qué madre no quereis ?

MADRE. Si quiero, ma qué haré,
Que no sé donde buscallo ?

Hijo. Bien podeis madre comprarlo,
Si no yo lo compraré ;
Mas por quitarme de afan
Si alguno conmigo topa,

Why cling'st thou to my breast ? dost thou not know
 That in my aching breast despair has changed
 The milky stream to blood ? Tear off my flesh,
 And so content thine hunger, for my arms
 Are weak, and can no longer clasp thee to me.
 Son of my soul, with what can I sustain thee?
 Even of my wasted flesh, there scarce remains
 Enough to satisfy thy craving hunger.
 Oh hunger, hunger ! terrible and fierce,
 With what most cruel pangs thou tak'st my life ;
 Oh war, what death dost thou prepare for me !

Boy. My mother ! let us hasten to the place
 We seek, for walking seems to make me worse.

MOTHER. My child, the house is near us, where at length
 Upon the burning pile thou may'st lay down
 The burthen that thou bearest.

Le daré toda esta ropa
 Por un mendrugo de pan.

MADRE. Qué mamás triste criatura !
 No sientes que a mi despecho
 Sacas ya del flaco pecho
 Por leche la sangre pura ?
 Lleva la carne a pedazos
 Y procura de hartarte,
 Que no pueden mas llevarte
 Mis floxos cansados brazos !
 Hijos del anima mia
 Con qué os podré sustentar,
 Si a penas tengo que os dar
 De la propia carne mia ?
 O hambre terrible y fuerte,
 Como me acabas la vida !
 O guerra solo venida
 Para causarme la muerte !

Hijo. Madre mia, que me fino,

I almost repent of having introduced this terrible scene, so full of cruel sufferings. It is the prison of Ugolino rendered ten times more horrible. The calamity being extended over a whole city, famine contends with the most tender, as well as the most passionate, feelings. It is because sufferings like these have really existed, because the very name of war recalls them to our minds, that such scenes ought not to be represented. The misfortunes of *Œdipus* have passed a way : the feast of *Thyestes* will never again be celebrated ; but who can say that in some city exposed to the horrors of a siege, a nameless mother may not, like the *Numantian* matron, be nourishing her infant with blood instead of milk, struggling against the excess of suffering which human nature was not formed to support ? If, indeed, we could succour or save her, it would be weakness to fear the shock which so frightful a picture produces ; but if eloquence and poetry are employed without object to give effect to such descriptions, how can we experience any pleasure

Aguijamos á do vamos,
Que parece que alargamos
La hambre con el camino.

MADRE. Hijo cerca está la casa
Adonde echaremos luego
En mitad del vivo fuego
El peso que te embaraza.

in emotions which border upon so terrible a reality?

At the commencement of the fourth act the alarm is sounded in the Roman camp, and Scipio demands the cause of the tumult. He learns that two Numantians have broken through the barriers, and, after killing several soldiers, have carried off some biscuit from a tent; that one of them again passed the wall, and gained the city, but that the other had been slain. In the following scene we find Morandro again entering Numantia, wounded and bleeding. He is weeping over his friend's fate, and the bread which he is carrying to Lira, is moistened with his tears. He lays before her this last offering of affection, and expires at her feet. Lira refuses to touch the sustenance which has been so dearly bought; while her little brother seeks refuge in her arms, and dies in convulsions. A soldier now appears upon the stage pursuing a woman whom he is endeavouring to kill, for an order has been issued by the senate of Numantia, that all the women should be put to the sword. He, however, refuses to slay Lira, and bears away with him to the funeral pile the two bodies which lay before her.

War, Famine, and Sickness now appear, and dispute for the ruins of Numantia. Their description of the calamities which the city has suffered, is cold, when compared with the preceding frightful scenes. Theogenes then passes

over the stage with his wife, his two sons, and his daughter, conducting them to the pile, where they are to die. He informs them that they are to perish by his own hand, and his children submit to their fate. Two youths, Viriatus and Servius, flying before the soldiers, cross the stage; the first endeavours to reach a tower which will afford him a refuge, but the latter, being overcome by famine, can proceed no farther. Theogenes, who has despatched his wife and children, returns and beseeches a citizen to put him to death; the two, however, determine to fight near the pile, upon which the survivor is to cast himself. The Romans perceiving the stillness which reigns in Numantia, Caius Marius mounts upon the wall by a ladder; and is shocked to see the city one lake of blood, and the streets all filled with the dead. Scipio fears that this universal massacre will deprive him of all the honour of a triumph. If a single Numantian captive could be found alive to be chained to his car, that honour would be his; but Caius Marius and Jugurtha, who have traversed all the streets, have met with nothing but gore and corpses. At last, however, they discover Viriatus, the young man who has taken refuge at the top of a tower. Scipio addresses him, and invites him, with kind words and promises, to deliver himself up. Viriatus rejects these offers with indignation. He is unwilling to survive his country; and after heap-

ing curses upon the Romans, he precipitates himself from the tower, and falls lifeless at the feet of Scipio. Renown, with a trumpet in her hand, terminates the tragedy by promising eternal glory to the Numantians.

The *Numantia* was acted several times in the earlier part of the life of Cervantes, whilst the nation was still warm with the enthusiasm which the victories of Charles V. had produced; and whilst the reverses which they began to experience under Philip II. made them doubly resolute not to stain their ancient glories. We may imagine the effect which the *Numantia* must have produced if it was represented in Saragossa, as it has been asserted, during the siege of that city; we may conceive how deeply the Spaniards must have felt the sentiments of national glory and independence which breathe throughout the drama, and with what animation they must have prepared for new dangers and new sacrifices. We thus see that the theatre, which we have denominated barbarous, did in fact approach much nearer than our own, to that of the Greeks, in the energetic influence which it exerted over the people, and in the empire with which the poet ruled his audience. We cannot, at the same time, avoid being struck in the *Numantia* with the ferocity which reigns throughout the whole drama. The resolution of the Numantians, the details of their situation, the

progress of the plot, and the catastrophe, are all terrific. The tragedy does not draw tears, but the shuddering horror which it induces becomes almost a punishment to the spectator. It is one symptom of the change which Philip II. and the *autos da fé* had wrought in the character of the Castilians; and we shall soon have occasion to notice others. When the soldiers of fanaticism had acquired these ferocious qualities, literature itself did not wholly escape the infection.

There is still another drama by Cervantes, *Life in Algiers: El Trato de Argel*: which has been called a comedy; but neither that title, nor the name of Cervantes, must lead us to expect in this piece the same humour which reigns throughout *Don Quixote*. To the gloomy picture which is represented in this drama, no relief is afforded either by liveliness of plot, or by amusing delineation of character. Cervantes did, indeed, in his interludes condescend to excite laughter; but the object both of his comedies and of his tragedies was to awaken terror and pity. All his compositions were adapted to excite popular feeling on the topics of politics or religion; to strengthen the pride, the independence, or the fanaticism of the Spaniards. His dramas were distinguished into tragedies and comedies according to the rank of the characters and the dignity of the action, and not from any reference to the liveliness or the gravity of their subjects.

Cervantes, as we have already stated, had been detained for five years and a half a captive at Algiers, and his own sufferings and those of his companions had made a deep impression upon him. He returned to Spain with feelings of violent hatred against the Moors, and with an ardent desire to contribute towards the redemption of those prisoners who had fallen into the hands of the Musulmans. His comedy of *Life in Algiers*; another drama which he published towards the close of his life, entitled, *Los Baños de Argel*; his tale of the Captive in Don Quixote, and that of the Generous Lover, were not mere literary works, but charitable endeavours to serve his brother captives, and to excite public opinion in their favour. His object was to rouse the nation and the king himself against the Musulmans, and to preach a kind of crusade for the deliverance of all Christian captives.

To accomplish this end he proposed merely to give to the public a sketch of the life of the captives in Algiers, and a description of the interior of their habitations. He therefore employed no dramatic action, no plot, and no catastrophe; nor did he pay the least regard to the laws of the unities. He only collected into one point of view the various sufferings, pains, and humiliations which were consequent upon slavery amongst the Moors. The truth of the picture, the proximity of the scene, and the immediate interest of

the spectators, supplied the want of art, which is visible in this drama, and exerted, it may easily be believed, a more powerful influence over the audience.

Life in Algiers contains various adventures, unconnected with one another, except in the community of suffering. The principal characters are Aurelio and Sylvia, an affectionate pair who are exposed to the solicitations of their mistress and master. The religion and conjugal fidelity of Aurelio having induced him to repress all the advances of his mistress, Zara, he is at last tempted with enchantments; but the demons soon perceive that they have no power over a Christian. He is then exposed to the seductive influence of Occasion and Necessity, who are personified by the dramatist, and who make various suggestions to the captive, which he at last succeeds in expelling from his mind. At the conclusion of the piece, both Aurelio and Sylvia are sent home by the Dey on the promise of a large ransom:

Another captive of the name of Sebastian relates, with extreme indignation, a spectacle of which he had been a witness; the reprisals exercised upon the Christians by the Musulmans. The conduct of the Moors, however, at which the captive expresses such horror, appears only to have been a just retaliation. A Moor, who had been forced to submit to the ceremony of baptism at Valentia, being afterwards exiled with

his countrymen, had taken up arms against the Christians. Being made prisoner in an engagement, he was recognized as having been baptized, and was delivered over to the Inquisition, who condemned him to be burnt as a relapsed infidel. His relations and friends, eager to avenge him, bought a Valentian captive of the same class of Inquisitors, from amongst whom his judges had been appointed, and inflicted upon their captive a similar death. If the rigour of such reprisals could have suspended the frightful proceedings of the Inquisition, this attempt to terrify the Spaniards with the consequences of their own barbarity would have been grounded upon good reason. The retaliation in this case did not inflict the punishment of the guilty upon the innocent, for every Inquisitor was bound to participate in the same crime. The anecdote is founded on fact, and the Inquisitor burnt by the Algerines was the monk Miguel de Aranda.

One of the most affecting scenes in the drama is the Slave-market. The public crier offers to sale a father and mother and their two children, who are to be sold in separate lots. The resignation of the father, who in this dreadful calamity does not forget to confide in the goodness of God, the tears of the mother, and the childish conviction of the younger captives, that no power upon earth can dispose of them contrary to the will of their parents, altogether form a frightful picture, the truth of which is the more

impressive from the circumstance that the characters are anonymous, and that in the present age such scenes may happen daily at Algiers or in our colonies. The merchant who is about to buy one of the children makes him open his mouth, in order that he may see whether he is in good health. The unhappy child, unconscious that it is possible for him to suffer greater griefs than those which he has already experienced, imagines that the merchant is going to extract a decayed tooth, and assuring him that it does not ache, begs him not to pull it out. These little incidents more forcibly describe the horrors of slavery than the most laboured eloquence could do. In the child is exhibited a touching ignorance of the destiny which awaits him; in the merchant a cold and calculating interest contrasted with a sensibility which he beholds without any emotion. We suffer in common with the whole human race, which we here see degraded to the condition of the brutes. The merchant, who is in other respects a worthy man, after giving 130 piastres for the youngest of the children, thus addresses him :

MERCHANT. Come hither, child, 'tis time to go to rest.

JUAN. Signor, I will not leave my mother here,
To go with any one.

* MERCADER. Ven niño, vente a holgar.

JUAN. Señor, no hé de dexar
Mi madre por ir con otro.

- MOTHER.** Alas! my child, thou art no longer mine,
But his who bought thee.
- JUAN.** What! then, have you, mother,
Forsaken me?
- MOTHER.** O Heavens! how cruel are ye!
- MERCHANT.** Come, hasten, boy.
- JUAN.** Will you go with me, brother?
- FRANCISCO.** I cannot, Juan, 'tis not in my power,—
May Heaven protect you, Juan!
- MOTHER.** Oh, my child,
My joy and my delight, God won't forget thee!
- JUAN.** O father! mother! whither will they bear me
Away from you?
- MOTHER.** Permit me, worthy Signor,
To speak a moment in my infant's ear?
Grant me this small contentment; very soon
I shall know nought but grief.

- MADRE.** Vé, hijo, que ya no cres
Sino del que te ha comprado.
- JUAN.** Ay! madre! haveis me dexado?
- MADRE.** Ay cielo! quan cruel eres!
- MERCAD.** Anda, rapaz, ven con migo.
- JUAN.** Vamonos juntos, hermano?
- FRANCISCO.** No puedo, ni está en mi mano,
El cielo vaga contigo.
- MADRE.** O'mi bien y mí alegría
No se olvide de ti Dios!
- JUAN.** Donde me llevan sin vos,
Padre mio y madre mia!
- MADRE.** Quieres que hable señor
A mi hijo un momento?
Dame ese breve contento
Pues sera eterno el dolor.

- MERCHANT. What you would say,
Say now ; to-night is the last time.
- MOTHER. To-night
Is the first time my heart e'er felt such grief.
- JUAN. Pray keep me with you, mother, for I know not
Whither he'd carry me.
- MOTHER. Alas, poor child!
Fortune forsook thee even at thy birth ;
The heavens are overcast, the elements
Are turbid, and the very sea and winds
Are all combin'd against me. Thou, my child,
Know'st not the dark misfortunes into which
Thou art so early plung'd, but happily
Lackest the power to comprehend thy fate.
What I would crave of thee, my life, since I
Must never more be bless'd with seeing thee,

- MERCAD. Quanto quisieres le dî
Puez será la vez postrera.
- MADRE. Si, pues esta es la primera
Que en este trance me vî.
- JUAN. Tenème con voz aqui,
Madre, que voy no sè donde.
- MADRE. La ventura se te asconde
Hijo, pues yo te pari.
Hase escurecido el cielo,
Turbado los elementos
Conjurado mar y vientos
Todos en mi desconsuelo ;
No conoces tu desdicha
Aunque estas bien dentro della,
Puesto que el no conocella
Lo puedes tener por dicha.
Lo que te ruego alma mia

Is that thou never, never wilt forget
 To say, as thou wert wont, thy *Ave Mary*;
 For that bright queen of goodness, grace and virtue,
 Can loosen all thy bonds and give thee freedom.

AYDAR. Behold the wicked Christian, how she counsels
 Her innocent child. You wish, then, that your
 child

Should, like yourself, continue still in error.

JUAN. 'O mother, mother, may I not remain?
 And must these Moors then carry me away?

MOTHER. With thee, my child, they rob me of my treasures.

JUAN. Oh I am much afraid!

MOTHER. 'Tis I, my child,
 Who ought to fear at seeing thee depart.
 Thou wilt forget thy God, me, and thyself,

Pues ya el verte se me impide,
 Es que nunca se te olvide
 Rezar el *Ave Maria*,
 Que esta Reyna de bondad
 De virtud y gracia llena
 Ha de librar tu cadena
 Y ponerte en libertad.

AYDAR. Mira la mala cristiana
 Que consejo dá al muchacho,
 Sé, que no estaba borracho
 Como tú, falsa liviana.

JUAN. Madre, alfin que no me quedo?
 Qué me llevan estos Moros?

MADRE. Contigo van mis tesoros.

JUAN. Afé que me ponen miedo.

MADRE. Mas miedo me queda á mi,
 De verte ir á do vas,
 Que nunca te acordaras
 De Dios, de ti, ni de mi.
 Porque estos tus tiernos años

What else can I expect from thee, abandon'd
 At such a tender age, amongst a people
 Full of deceit and all iniquity?

CRIER. Silence, you villainous woman, if you would not
 Have your head pay for what your tongue has done.

In the fifth act Juan is introduced as a renegade. He has been seduced by the dainties and rich clothing which his master has given him. He is proud of his turban, and disdains the other captives, saying, that it is a sin in a Musulman to remain in conversation with Christians. Cervantes has inserted a scene between Juan and his mother, who is in despair at his apostacy. The mother, however, does not again appear; her grief must have been too poignant for representation.

The escape of Pedro Alvarez, one of the captives, who being unable any longer to bear the horrors of slavery, resolves to cross the desert, and endeavour to reach Oran by following the line of the coast, forms another independent plot. He prepares ten pounds of biscuit, made of eggs,

Qué prometen sino aquesto ?
 Entre iniqua gente puesto,
 Fabricadora de engaños ?

PREGON. Calla, vieja, mala picza
 Sino quieres por mas mengua
 Que lo que dice tu lengua
 Venga a pagar tu cabeça.

flour and honey; and with this stock of provisions and three pair of shoes he enters upon a journey of sixty leagues, through an unknown country, and over a burning desert infested with wild beasts.

In one scene the captive is introduced consulting with Saavedra, under which name, in all probability, the dramatist intended to represent himself. In another, we find him in the midst of the desert, where he is wandering after having lost his way; his provisions are exhausted, his clothes are in tatters, his shoes are worn out, and he is tormented with hunger, and reduced to such an extreme of weakness, that he can with difficulty walk. In this state of distress he invokes the Virgin of Montserrat, and presently a lion appearing crouches down at his feet. The captive finds his strength restored; the lion becomes his guide; he recommences his journey, and when he appears upon the stage the third time, he has nearly arrived at Oran.

Towards the conclusion of the fifth act the arrival of a monk of the order of the Trinity is announced, bearing with him a sum of money for the redemption of the captives. The prisoners throw themselves on their knees in prayer, and the curtain falls, leaving the spectators to conclude that they are all redeemed.

Such are the two dramas which alone remain, of the twenty or thirty which were composed by Cervantes in his youth. They are curious

specimens of the character which that great genius gave to the national drama of Spain, at a period when it was in his power to model it according to his will. The theatre of the ancients was not unknown to Cervantes, for, in addition to the opportunities he had enjoyed of becoming acquainted with it in the learned languages, he was very familiar with the Italian, and consequently with the efforts which had been made at the court of Leo X. to revive the scenic representations of Greece and Rome. In Spain, indeed, during the reign of Charles V. Perez de Oliva had translated the *Electra* of Sophocles, and the *Hecuba* of Euripides; Terence also had been rendered into Spanish by Pedro Simon de Abril, and Plautus had appeared in a Castilian dress. Cervantes, however, thought that the moderns ought to possess a drama, which should represent their own manners, opinions, and character, and not those of antiquity. He formed, indeed, his idea of tragedy upon the models of the ancients; but that which he beheld was not what we discover in their dramas. The dramatic art appeared to him to be the art of transporting the audience into the midst of events calculated, from their political or religious interest, to make the most profound impression upon the mind; tragedy, the art of making the spectators sharers in the most brilliant historical incidents; and comedy, of introducing them into the houses of indi-

viduals, and of laying bare their vices or their virtues. He attached little importance to that which has become a matter of such consequence in our eyes, the space of time which is supposed to elapse between each scene, and the power of transferring the actors from place to place. He paid the greatest attention, on the contrary, to that which we have considered as a defect in the ancient drama, the poetical and religious, or lyrical portion, which amongst the Greeks was the province of the chorus, and which Cervantes wished to reproduce by the aid of allegorical personages.

The ancients, who made religious spectacles of their tragedies, always aimed at representing the course of Providence or Fate, as linked with human actions. The choruses, which during the progress of the drama, shock our ideas of propriety, appeared to them to be necessary for the purpose of interpreting the will of the Divinity, of recalling the thoughts from terrestrial to higher objects, and of re-establishing the tranquillity of the soul by the delights of lyrical poetry, after the passionate excitement of theatrical eloquence. Such likewise was the end which Cervantes proposed to himself, in the creation of his allegorical personages. He did not allow them to mingle in the action like supernatural beings, nor did he make any of the incidents depend upon their agency. Indeed, like the

choruses of the ancients, they might be rejected from his dramas altogether without any void being perceived. His aim was to give us an idea, through their means, of the corresponding progress of the universe, and of the designs of Providence. He wished to enable us to behold in his dramas the things invisible, as though they were material. He wished to transport his drama from the real world into the realm of poetry ; and he endeavoured to accomplish this object by the assistance of the most elevated language, which he could put into the mouths of these unearthly beings, by the magic of lyrical poetry, and by the employment of the boldest figures. These objects, which are altogether excluded from our drama, but which were much considered by the ancients, have been but imperfectly attained by Cervantes. Perhaps he did not possess in a high degree the lyrical talent. If there are any sublime passages in his plays, they are to be found in the dialogues, and not in the rhapsodies of his allegorical characters. Moreover, the introduction of allegorical personages upon the stage appears to be directly contrary to the essence of the drama, which, as it appeals as well to the eye as to the ear, ought not to admit of objects which never can have a visible existence. When Famine or Sickness appears in the Numantia, and Occasion or Necessity in the Life in Algiers, the action of the drama is arrested. These metaphysical abstractions

destroy at once the illusion; the vivacity, and the interest of the drama, and the attention is confused by these varying appeals to the intellect and to the senses.

In the *Numantia* Cervantes has scrupulously observed the unity of action, the unity of interest, and the unity of passion. No episode is mingled with the terrible plot. The whole people are animated with one idea, and partake of the same suffering. Individual wretchedness is swallowed up in the general calamity, which it only serves to render more striking. The story of *Morandro* and *Lira* presents us with a picture of what every lover in *Numantia* must have suffered; and instead of detracting from the interest, serves to concentrate it. There are no traces either in this play, or in the *Life in Algiers*, of that insipid spirit of gallantry which has infested the French theatre from its birth, and which has been erroneously attributed to the Spanish. In Cervantes, and generally in the Spanish dramas, we never see a hero in love, but when he ought to be so; and their language, figurative and hyperbolical as it is, according to the bad taste of the nation, is still passionate and not gallant. The unity which was so rigorously observed in the *Numantia*, was completely abandoned by Cervantes in his *Life in Algiers*. It is strange that he did not perceive that it is that quality alone which is the basis of harmony; which preserves the relation of the vari-

ous parts ; which distinguishes the productions of genius from real life, and the dialogue of the drama from the conversations of society. Life in Algiers is consequently a tiresome play, and loses its interest as we advance in it, notwithstanding it possesses some beautiful scenes.

Hitherto we have only animadverted upon the errors of the art ; in other points of view, we may perceive that it was in its infancy. Thus Cervantes has formed a false idea of the patience of his audience. Supposing that a fine speech must produce the same effect upon the stage as before an academical assembly, he has frequently made his characters trespass beyond every boundary, both of natural dialogue and of the reader's patience. He who in his narrative style was so excellent, who in his romances and novels so completely possessed the art of exciting and of sustaining interest, of saying precisely what was proper and stopping exactly where he should, yet knew not how much the public would be willing to hear from the mouth of an actor. Many of the Spanish dramatists appear to have been equally ignorant upon this point.

The two dramas of Cervantes occupy an insulated station in the literature of Spain. We discover not after him any instance of that terrible majesty which reigns throughout the Numantia, of that simplicity of action, that natural dialogue, and that truth of sentiment. Lope de Vega in-

roduced new plays upon the stage, and the public, captivated by the pleasure of pursuing an intrigue through its thousand windings, became disgusted with the representation of powerful and deep emotions, which produced not the effect of surprise. Cervantes himself gave way to the national taste, without satisfying it, in the eight plays which he published in his declining years; and the Castilian *Æschylus* may be said to have left us only one real specimen of his dramatic genius.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Novels and Romances of Cervantes; the Araucana of Don Alonzo de Ercilla.

CERVANTES was eminently gifted with the narrative talent, a quality which seems to be intimately connected with dramatic powers, since, in order to possess it, an author must be capable of understanding and adhering to the unity of his narrative. That unity is the central point to which all the other portions of the work have reference, and upon which they all depend. The episodes are thus connected with the main action, and never fatigue the mind; the plot excites the attention; and the catastrophe clears away all the mysteries at once. It is moreover requisite, as in the dramatic art, to be capable of giving the colours of truth and nature to every object, and the appearance of completeness and probability to every character; to bring events before the reader by words, as the dramatist does by action; to say exactly what ought to be said, and nothing farther. It is in fact this talent that has conferred upon Cervantes his immortality. His most celebrated works are those romances in which the richness of his invention is relieved by the charms of his style, and by his happy art of ar-

ranging the incidents and bringing them before the eye of the reader. We have already spoken of *Don Quixote*, which merited a separate examination, and we must content ourselves with bestowing less time on the pastoral romance of *Galatea*, on that of *Persiles and Sigismunda*, and on the collection of little tales which Cervantes has called his *Exemplary Novels*. In giving an idea of the literature of a country, it seems proper to detail all the works of celebrated authors, and to pass rapidly over those who have not attained the first rank. By studying the former, we are enabled to observe not only the intellectual progress of the nation, but likewise its peculiar taste and spirit, and frequently even the manners and history of the people. It is much more agreeable to contemplate the Castilians as they are painted in the works of Cervantes, than to attempt a picture of our own, which must necessarily be less faithful than the native delineation.

Cervantes had reached his sixty-fifth year when he published, under the name of *Exemplary or Instructive Novels*, twelve beautiful tales, which though they have been translated into French, are not generally known.* This species of com-

* [There is an English translation of the *Exemplary Novels* by Shelton, which was republished in 1742. A new translation has lately appeared in two vols. 12mo. London, 1822. The extract from *The Gipsy-Girl*, given in the text, has been transcribed from these volumes. *Tr.*]

position was, before the time of Cervantes, unknown in modern literature; for he did not take Boccaccio and the Italian Novelists as his models, any more than Marmontel has done in his *Contes Moraux*. These tales are, in fact, little romances, in which love is delicately introduced, and where the adventures serve as a vehicle for passionate sentiments.

The first novel is entitled, *La Gitanilla*, or *The Gipsy Girl*, and contains an interesting picture of that race of people, who were formerly spread over all Europe, though they nowhere submitted themselves to the laws of society. About the middle of the fourteenth century this wandering race first appeared in Europe, and were by some considered to be a caste of Parias who had escaped from India, and were called indifferently Egyptians and Bohemians. From that period down to the present day they have continued to wander through the various countries of Europe, subsisting by petty thefts, by levying contributions on the superstitious, or by the share which they often took in festivals. They have now almost entirely disappeared from many of the nations of the continent. The rigorous police of France, Italy, and Germany, does not suffer the existence of a race of vagabonds who pay no regard to the rights of property and who despise the laws. There are still, however, numbers of these people to be found in England,

where the legislature formerly sanctioned such cruel enactments against them that it was found impossible to put them into execution. Many, likewise, still exist in Russia, and some in Spain, where the mildness of the climate and the wild features of the country are highly favourable to that unconfined and wandering life, for which the Bohemians seem to have derived a taste from the eastern nations. The description of the community which they formed in the time of Cervantes is more curious from the circumstance of their numbers at that period being greater, and their liberty more complete, than at any subsequent time; while the superstition of the people afforded them a readier support. Their manners, their laws, and their characters, were consequently at that period developed with much more truth and simplicity.

The heroine of the first tale, who is called *Preciosa*, accompanied by three young girls of about fifteen years of age, like herself, frequents the streets of Madrid under the superintendence of an old woman, for the purpose of amusing the public in the coffee-houses and other public places, by dancing to the sound of the tambourine, which she sometimes accompanies by songs and verses occasionally of her own extemporaneous composition, or else obtained from poets who were employed by the gipsies. The noblemen used to invite them into their houses,

that they might have the pleasure of seeing them dance, and the ladies in order to have their fortunes told them. Preciosa, who was modest and much respected, yet possessed that vivacity of mien and that gaiety and promptitude of repartee which so remarkably distinguished her race. Even in religious festivals she would appear and chaunt songs in honour of the saints and the Virgin. In all probability, this apparent devotion of the Bohemians, who never take any part in public worship, protected them in Spain, where they were called *Christianos Nuevos*, from the animadversion of the Inquisition. The delicacy and beauty of Preciosa gained the heart of a cavalier, not more distinguished by his fortune than by his figure ; but she refused to accept his hand, unless he consented to pass a probation of two years by residing amongst the gipsies, and sharing their mode of life. The address of one of the oldest gipsies to the cavalier, who assumes the name of Andres, is remarkable for that purity and elegance of language and that eloquence of thought which are peculiar to Cervantes. The gipsy takes Preciosa by the hand, and presents her to Andres :

“ We appropriate to you the companionship of this young girl, who is the flower and ornament of all the gipsies to be found throughout Spain. It is now virtuously placed within your own power to consider her either as your wife,

or as your mistress. Examine her thoroughly, weigh maturely whether she is pleasing to you, find out whether she has any defect, and should you fancy that you are not calculated for each other, throw your eyes around upon all the other gipsy girls, and you shall have the object of your selection. But we warn you that when once you have made your choice, you cannot retract, and must be contented with your fate. No one dares to encroach upon his friend, and hence we are shielded from the torments of jealousy. Adultery is never committed amongst us; for if in any instance our wives or our mistresses are detected in infringing our laws, we inflict punishment with the utmost severity. You must also be apprised that we never have resort to courts of justice; we have our own jurisdiction, we execute judgment ourselves, we are both judges and executioners, and after regular condemnation, we get rid of the parties by burying them in the mountains and deserts, and no person whatsoever, not even their parents, can obtain information of them, or bring us to account for their deaths. It is the dread of this summary jurisdiction which preserves chastity within its natural bounds; and thence it is, as I have already stated, that we live in perfect tranquillity on this score, so dreadfully mischievous and annoying in other societies. There are few things which we possess, that we do not possess in

common ; but wives and mistresses are a sacred exception. We command the whole universe, the fields, the fruits, the herbage, the forests, the mountains, the rivers, and the fountains, the stars and all the elements of nature. Early accustomed to hardship, we can scarcely be said to be sufferers ; we sleep as soundly and as comfortably upon the ground as upon beds of down ; and the parched skin of our bodies is to us equal to a coat of mail, impenetrable to the inclemencies of the weather. Insensible to grief, the most cruel torture does not afflict us, and under whatever form they make us encounter death, we do not shrink even to the change of colour. We have learned to despise death. We make no distinction between the affirmative and the negative, when we find it absolutely necessary to our purpose. We are often martyrs, but we never turn informers. We sing, though loaded with chains in the darkest dungeons, and our lips are hermetically sealed under all the severe inflictions of the rack. The great and undisguised object of our profession is ‘ furtively to seize the property of others, and appropriate it to our own use ;’ thereby invariably imitating the plausible but perfidious example of the generality of mankind under one mask or other, in which however we have no occasion to court witnesses to instruct us. In the day we employ ourselves in insignificant, amusing, trifling matters, but we

devote the night and its accommodating darkness to the great object of our professional combination. The brilliancy of glory, the etiquette of honour, and the pride of ambition, form no obstacles to us as they do in other fraternities. Hence we are exempt from that base, cowardly, and infamous servitude, which degrades the illustrious unhappy voluntarily into slaves."

Such was the singular race of people who lived the life of the uncultivated savage, in the midst of society; who preserved manners, a language, and probably a religion of their own, maintaining their independence in Spain, England, and Russia, for nearly five hundred years. It may be supposed that the *Gipsy Girl* terminates like every other romance, the heroine of which is of low birth. Preciosa is discovered to be the daughter of a noble lady, and her real rank being discovered, she is married to her lover.

The second novel, which is entitled *The Liberal Lover*, contains the adventures of some Christians who have been reduced to slavery by the Turks. Cervantes lived in the time of the famous corsairs Barbarossa and Dragut. The Ottoman and Barbary fleets then claimed the dominion of the Mediterranean, and had been long accustomed, in conjunction with the fleets of Henry II. and the French, annually to ravage the shores of Italy and Spain. No one could be assured of living in safety. The Moors, running the light

vessels on shore, used to rush sword in hand into the gardens and houses which adjoined the sea, generally attending more closely to the seizing of captives, than to the acquisition of plunder, from a conviction that the wealthy individuals whom they thus carried into Barbary, and shut up in the slave-yards, or condemned to the hardest labour, would gladly purchase redemption from this horrid servitude even at the price of their whole fortune. In this state of terror, during the reigns of Charles V. and his successors, did the people live who dwelt upon the shores of the Mediterranean. Sicily and the kingdom of Naples, not being the residence of their sovereign, were more particularly exposed to the cruelties of the Barbary powers. They were, in fact, without a marine, without garrisons, without resources for defence; in short, without any other than a vexatious viceregal government, which oppressed without protecting them. It was in their gardens, near Trapani, in Sicily, that the liberal lover and his mistress Leonisa were made captive. They meet each other again at Nicosia, in Cyprus, two years after the taking of that city, in 1571; and their adventures possess the double merit of powerful romantic interest and great fidelity of character and description. Cervantes, who had fought in the wars of Cyprus and in the Greek seas, and who during his captivity had become well acquainted with the

Musulmans and with the condition of their Christian slaves, has given to his eastern tales a great appearance of historical truth. The imagination cannot feign a more cruel moral infliction than that to which a man of a cultivated mind is subjected, when he falls, together with all the objects of his fondest affection, into the hands of a barbarian master. The adventures, therefore, of Corsairs and their captives are all of them singularly romantic. At one period, the French, the Italians, and the Spanish, borrowed all their plots from this source. The public, however, soon became fatigued with the same unvarying fictions. Truth alone possesses the essence of variety; and the imagination, unnourished by truth, is compelled to copy itself. Every picture of captivity which Cervantes has presented to us is an original, for he painted from the memory of his sufferings. The other descriptions of this kind appear to be merely casts from this first model. Romance-writers should not be permitted to introduce the corsairs of Algiers into their tales, unless, like Cervantes, they have been themselves inmates of the slave-yard.

The third tale, entitled *Rinconete and Cortadillo*, is of another class, though completely Spanish. It is in the *Picaresco* style, of which the author of *Lazarillo de Tormes* was the inventor. The history of two young thieves is related in this novel with the greater humour, inasmuch as the wit of the

Spanish writers was peculiarly reserved for the description of vulgar life. It seems that they were only permitted to ridicule such as had absolutely cast aside all pretensions to honour. It is from those writers that we have invariably borrowed our descriptions of the social life and organization of the community of thieves and beggars, and it is amongst them alone, I am inclined to believe, that they ever existed. The company of robbers of Seville, and the authority possessed by their chief, Monipodio, are pleasantly described in this novel. The most laughable portions of it, however, and which are very correct as far as regards both Spain and Italy, are those in which the strange union of devotion and licentiousness amongst these vagabonds is described. In the place where the thieves assemble there is an image of the Virgin, with a throne for the offerings, and a vessel of holy water near it. Amongst the robbers an old woman arrives, "who, without saying a word to any one, walks across the room, and, taking some of the holy water, devoutly falls upon her knees before the image; and after a long prayer, having kissed the ground thrice, and raised as often her eyes and hands to heaven, rises, places her offering on the throne, and walks out again." All the thieves, in turn, make an offering of silver; for which purpose they reserve part of their acquisitions, to be employed in masses for the souls of their deceased

companions, and of their benefactors. Thus a young robber, who conducts Rinconete to the meeting, to the question—‘Perhaps, then, you follow the occupation of a thief?’ replies : ‘I do so, in the service of God, and of all worthy people!’

In general we are apt to imagine that this corrupt and unruly portion of society, who violate without ceasing all laws, divine and human, are infidels in their religious opinions; as it is difficult to believe that those who feel any sentiments of religion, would attach themselves to such infamous and criminal occupations. When, therefore, in the countries of the South, we remark assassins, robbers, and prostitutes, scrupulously fulfilling all the observances of religion, we immediately accuse them of hypocrisy, and imagine that, by this show of Christianity, they merely wish to deceive those whose eyes are upon them. This, however, is an error; for in the South of Europe all these people, the refuse of society, are really under the influence of religious feelings. The malefactors, when they become numerous, find or form an abandoned priesthood, who, living upon their offerings, and partaking the produce of their crimes, are always ready to sell them absolution. The criminal commits the offence with a determination to repent of it, and in the expectation of absolution; while the priest confesses him with a conviction that the faith is in him, and that the

repentance is sincere. Scarcely, however, does the penitent leave the church than he returns to his criminal habits. By this shocking abuse of religion, the priest and the offender silence their consciences in the midst of all their iniquities. Their religion is not a salutary curb: it is an infamous contract, by which the most corrupt men believe that they may purchase a license to satisfy all their evil propensities. The voice of conscience is stifled by their faith in the act of penitence; and the impious and infidel robber would never reach the same degree of depravity, which we may remark in those villains so zealous and so pious, who have been painted by Cervantes, and of whom we find the models in Italy as well as in Spain.

The three first novels are of a very dissimilar cast; the nine which follow them, complete the varied circle of invention. The *Spanish-English Lady*, it is true, shews that Cervantes was much more imperfectly acquainted with the heretics than with the Moors. The *Licentiate of Glass*, and the *Dialogue of the two Dogs of the Hospital of the Resurrection*, are satirical pieces, displaying much wit and incident. The *Beautiful Char-woman* resembles a love-romance; and *The Jealous Man of Estremadura* is distinguished by the excellence of its characters, by its plot, and by the skill with which the catastrophe is brought about. We have, in this tale, an example of the prodigious

power of music over the Moors. An African slave, whose fidelity had resisted every temptation, cannot be persuaded to be unfaithful to his trust, except by the hope of being taught to play upon the guitar, and to chaunt ballads like the pretended blind man, who every evening rouses him to ecstasy by his music. The novels of Cervantes, like his *Don Quixote*, lead us into Spain, and open to us the houses and the hearts of her inhabitants; while their infinite variety proves how completely their author was master of every shade of sentiment and every touch of feeling.

We have already related that shortly before his death Cervantes was employed upon a work, the dedication to which he composed after he had received extreme unction. It is entitled: *The Sufferings of Persiles and Sigismonda, a Northern Story*: and to this work more than to any other of his literary labours did he attach his hopes of fame. The judgment of the Spanish has placed this production by the side of *Don Quixote*, and above all the author's other works; but a foreigner will not, I should imagine, concede to it so much merit. It is the offspring of a rich, but at the same time of a wandering imagination, which confines itself within no bounds of the possible or the probable, and which is not sufficiently founded on reality. Cervantes, who was so correct and elegant a painter of all that fell within the sphere

of his observation, has been pleased to place the scene of his last tale in a world with which he had no acquaintance. He had traversed Spain, Italy, Greece, and Barbary; he was at home in every part of the South. He has, however, entitled this romance a Northern story, and his complete ignorance of the North, in which his scene is laid, and which he imagines to be a land of barbarians, anthropophagi, pagans, and enchanters, is sufficiently singular. Don Quixote often promises Sancho Panza the kingdoms of Denmark and Soprabisa; but Cervantes, in fact, knew little more of these countries than his knight. The King of Denmark and the King of Danea are both introduced, though Denmark and Danea are the same country. One half of the isles of that country, he says, are savage, deserted, and covered with eternal snows; the other is inhabited by corsairs, who slay men for the purpose of eating their hearts, and make women prisoners in order to elect from amongst them a queen. The Poles, the Norwegians, the Irish, and the English, are all introduced in their turns, and represented as possessing manners no less extraordinary, and a mode of life no less fantastic; nor is the scene laid in that remote antiquity, the obscurity of which might admit of such fables. The heroes of the romance are the contemporaries of Cervantes; and some of them are the soldiers of Charles V., who were marched

with him into Flanders or Germany, and who afterwards wandered into the northern countries.

The hero of the romance, Persiles, is the second son of the King of Iceland ; and his mistress, Sigismonda, is the daughter and heiress of the Queen of Friseland, a country which has escaped from the chart, but which is now supposed to have been the Feroe Islands, where the very veracious travellers of the fifteenth century have placed many of their adventures. Sigismonda had been betrothed to Maximin, the brother of Persiles, whose savage and rude manners were little calculated to touch the heart of the sweetest, the most beautiful, and the most perfect of women. The two lovers make their escape at the same time, with the intention of travelling together on a pilgrimage to Rome ; no doubt for the purpose of obtaining from the Pope a dispensation from Sigismonda's engagements. Persiles assumes the name of Periander, and Sigismonda that of Auristela ; and during the whole of the romance they appear under these names : they pass as brother and sister ; and the secret of their birth and history, with which I have commenced my account of the novel, is not disclosed until the termination of the work. Their peregrinations through the North are contained in the first volume ; through the South, in the second. Exposed to more dangers than would be amply sufficient for ten reasonable romances ; captured

by savages, and recaptured; on the point of being roasted and eaten; shipwrecked innumerable times, separated and re-united, attacked by assassins, by poison, and by sorcery, and at the same time robbing all they meet of their hearts, they run greater risks from the love which they inspire than could be occasioned by hatred itself. The ravishers, however, who dispute for them, combat so fiercely amongst themselves that they are all slain. In this manner perish all the inhabitants of the *Barbarous Isle*, where a whole nation of pirates are consumed in the flames which they have themselves lighted. On another occasion, all the sailors of a vessel fight until none are left; but this was necessary, that our travellers might have a fit conveyance. This romance is indeed a singularly bloody one. Besides those who thus perish by wholesale, the number of individuals who die or kill themselves would almost fill the ranks of an army. The history of the hero and heroine is interspersed with a thousand episodes. Before they arrive at the end of their journey, they collect a numerous caravan, each member of which in turn recites his adventures. These are always, of course, most extraordinary, and manifest great fertility of invention. Many of them are amusing, but it appears to me that nothing is more fatiguing than the marvellous; and that there is never so great a similarity as between productions which resem-

ble nothing else in nature. Cervantes, in this novel, has fallen into many of the errors which he so humorously exposed in *Don Quixote*. I cannot suppose that in *Don Belianis* or in *Felix Mars of Hircania* more extravagance is to be found than in these volumes. The style of the ancient romance-writers, it is true, did not possess so much elegance and purity.

Amongst the episodes there is one which appears to me to be interesting, less on account of its own merits than because it reminds us of an amusing tale of one of our celebrated contemporaries. *Persiles*, in the *Barbarous Isle*, discovers, amongst the pirates of the Baltic, a man who is called *Rutilio de Sienna*, who is a dancing-master, like *Monsieur Violet* amongst the *Iroquois*. In his own country he had seduced one of his scholars, and had been imprisoned preparatory to his suffering a capital punishment. A witch, however, who had fallen in love with him, opened the doors of his prison. She spread a mantle on the ground before him. "She then desired me to place my foot upon it and to be of good courage, but for a moment to omit my devotions. I immediately saw that this was a bad beginning, and I perceived that her object was to convey me through the air. Although, like a good Christian, I held all sorcery in contempt, yet the fear of death in this instance made me resolve to obey her. I placed my foot on the middle of the mantle, and she

also. At the same time she muttered some words which I could not understand, and the mantle began to ascend. I felt terribly afraid, and there was not a single Saint in the Litany whom in my heart I did not invoke. The enchantress, doubtless, perceived my terror, and divined my prayers, for she again commanded me to abstain from them. 'Wretch that I am,' exclaimed I, 'what good can I hope for, if I am prevented from asking it from God, from whom proceeds all good?' At last I shut my eyes and suffered the devils to convey me whither they would, for such are the only post-horses which witches employ. After having been carried through the air for four hours, or a little more, as I should judge, I found myself at the close of the day in an unknown country.

"As soon as the mantle touched the ground, my companion said to me: 'Friend Rutilio, you have arrived at a place, where the whole human race cannot harm you.' As she spoke these words, she embraced me with very little reserve. I repelled her with all my strength, and perceived that she had taken the figure of a wolf. The sight froze my senses. However, as often happens in great dangers, when the very hopelessness of escape gives us desperate strength, I seized a hanger which I had by my side, and with unspeakable fury plunged it into the breast of what appeared to me to be a wolf, but which as it fell

lost that terrific shape. The enchantress, bathed in her blood, lay stretched at my feet.

“Consider, Sirs, that I was in a country perfectly unknown to me, and without a single person to guide me. I waited for many hours the return of day, but still it appeared not, and in the horizon there was no sign which announced the approaching sun. I quitted the corpse which excited in my heart so much fear and terror, and minutely examined the appearance of the heavens. I observed the motion of the stars, and from the course which they pursued, I imagined that it should already have been day. As I stood in this state of confusion, I heard the voice of people approaching the spot where I was. I advanced towards them, and demanded, in Tuscan, in what country I might be. One of them answered me in Italian: ‘This country is Norway; but who are you who question us in a tongue so little known?’ ‘I am,’ said I, ‘a wretch who in attempting to escape from death have fallen into his hands;’ and in a few words I related to them my journey, and the death of the enchantress. He who had spoken appeared to pity me, and said: ‘You ought, my good friend, to be very thankful to heaven, which has delivered you out of the power of wicked sorcerers, of whom there are many in these northern parts. It is said, indeed, that they transform themselves into he-wolves and she-wolves, for there are en-

chanters of both sexes. I know not how this can be, and as a Christian and a Catholic I do not believe it, notwithstanding experience demonstrates the contrary. It may, indeed, be said that their transformations are the illusions of the devil, who, by God's permission, thus punishes the sins of this evil generation.' I then asked him the hour, as the night appeared to me very long and the day came not. He replied, that in these remote regions the year was divided into four portions. There were three months of perfect night, during which the sun never appeared above the horizon; three months of daybreak, which were neither day nor night; three months of uninterrupted daylight, during which the sun never set; and lastly, three months of twilight: that the season then was the morning twilight, so that it was useless to look for the appearance of day. He added, that I must postpone until the period of perfect day my prospect of returning home; but that then vessels would sail with merchandize to England, France, and Spain. He inquired whether I was acquainted with any occupation by which I could support myself until my return to my own country. I replied, that I was a dancing-master, very skilful in the saltatory art, as well as in the nimble use of my fingers. Upon this, my new friend began to laugh most heartily, and assured me that these occupations, or duties, as I called them, were not in fashion in Norway,

or in the neighbouring countries." Rutilio's host, who was the great grandson of an Italian, taught him to work as a goldsmith. He afterwards made a voyage for commercial purposes, and was taken by the pirates, and carried to the Barbarous Isle, where he remained until all the inhabitants were destroyed in a tumult, when he escaped, together with Persiles and Sigismonda.

In this episode we recognise the pen of the author of *Don Quixote*. The insignificance of the hero and the greatness of the incidents are here as pleasantly contrasted as in *Don Quixote* are the valour of the hero and the petty nature of the incidents. This humorous spirit, however, and this ironical style of treating his own story, only manifest themselves occasionally in this work, which in its serious marvellousness is often fatiguing.

It has appeared to me that we may perceive in the works of Cervantes, the progress which superstition was making under the imbecile sovereigns of Spain, and the influence which it was acquiring over the mind of, an old man surrounded by priests, whose object it was to render him as intolerable and as cruel as themselves. In his novel of *Rinconete and Cortadillo*, Cervantes makes a skilful and delicate attack upon the superstitions of his country, and a similar spirit is observable in his *Don Quixote*. The episode of Ricoto the Moor, the countryman of Sancho Panza, who relates

the sufferings of the Moors, for the most part Christians, on their banishment from Spain, is highly touching. "The punishment of exile," says he, "which some esteem light and humane, is to us the most terrible of all. Wherever we roam we lament Spain, for there were we born, and that is our native country. Nowhere have we found the asylum which our misfortunes merited. In Barbary and in every part of Africa, where we had hoped to meet with a friendly reception, an asylum, and kind treatment, we have been more injured and more outraged than elsewhere. We knew not the benefits which we possessed until we lost them. The desire which we almost all of us feel to return into Spain is so great, that the greater part amongst us, who like me understand the language, and they are not few, have returned into this country, leaving their wives and children without support. It is now only that we feel by experience how sweet is that love of our country, which we formerly used to hear spoken of." With whatever reserve the established authorities are alluded to in this story, and in the equally affecting story of his daughter Ricota, it is impossible that it should not excite a deep interest for so many unfortunate wretches, who aggrieved in their religion, oppressed by the laws, no less than by individual tyranny, had been driven with their wives and their children, to the number of six hundred thousand, from a country where they had been established for

more than eight centuries ; a country which owed to them its agriculture, its commerce, its prosperity, and no inconsiderable part of its literature.

In *Persiles* and *Sigismonda* there is a Moorish adventure, the time of which is laid near the period of their expulsion from Spain. But in this place Cervantes endeavours to render the Musulmans odious, and to justify the cruel law which had been put in execution against them. The heroes of the romance arrive with a caravan at a Moorish village in the kingdom of Valencia, situated a league distant from the sea. The Moors hasten to welcome them ; offering their houses, and displaying the most obliging hospitality. The travellers at length yield to these entreaties, and take up their lodging with the richest Moor in the village. Scarcely, however, had they retired to repose, when the daughter of their host secretly apprizes them, that they had been thus pressingly invited in order that they might be entrapped on board a Barbary fleet, which would arrive in the night for the purpose of transporting the inhabitants of the village and all their riches to the shores of Africa, and that their host hoped by making them prisoners to procure a large ransom. The travellers, in consequence of this intelligence, took refuge in the church, where they fortified themselves ; and in the night the inhabitants of the village having

burned their dwellings, set sail for Africa. Cervantes on this occasion speaks in the person of a Christian Moor: "Happy youth! prudent king! go on, and execute this generous decree of banishment; fear not that the country will be deserted and uninhabited. Hesitate not to exile even those who have received baptism. Considerations like these ought not to impede your progress, for experience has shewn how vain they are. In a little while the land will be repéopled with new Christians, but of the ancient race. It will recover its fertility, and attain a higher prosperity than it now possesses. If the lord should not have vassals so numerous and so humble, yet those who remain will be faithful Catholics. With them the roads will be secure, peace will reign, and our property will be no longer exposed to the attacks of these robbers."

This work leads us to hazard another remark on the character of the Spanish nation. The hero and heroine are represented as patterns of perfection. They are young, beautiful, brave, generous, tender, and devoted to one another beyond any thing which human nature can be supposed to attain, yet with all these rare qualities they are addicted to falsehood, as though they had no other occupation. Upon every occasion, and before they can possibly know whether the falsehood will be useful or prejudicial to them, they make it an invariable rule to speak

directly contrary to the truth. If any one asks them a question, they deceive him. If any one confides in them, they deceive him. If any one asks their advice, they deceive him; and those who are most attached to them, are most surely the objects of this spirit of dissimulation. Arnaldo of Denmark, a noble and generous prince, is from the beginning to the end of the romance the victim of Sigismonda's duplicity. Sinforosa, is no less cruelly deceived by Persiles. Policarpo, who had shewn them great hospitality, loses his kingdom by the operation of their artifices. Every falsehood, however, proving successful, the personal interest of the hero is supposed to justify the measure, and what would to our eyes appear an act of base dissimulation, is represented by Cervantes as an effort of happy prudence. I am aware that foreigners who have travelled in Spain, and merchants who have traded with the Castilians, unanimously praise their good faith and honesty. Such authorities must be believed. Nothing is more common than to calumniate a people who are separated from us by their language and their manners; and those virtues must indeed be real which can triumph over all our national prejudices. The literature of Spain, at all events, does not strengthen our confidence in the good faith of the Castilians; not only is dissimulation crowned with success in their comedies, their

romances, and their descriptions of national manners, but that quality absolutely receives greater honour than candour. In the writers of the northern nations we discover an air of sincerity and frankness, and an openness of heart, which we may look for in vain amongst the Spanish authors. Their history bears a stronger testimony even than their literature to the truth of this accusation, which hangs over all the people of the South, and induces a suspicion of want of faith, which their sense of honour, their religion, and the system of morality which is current amongst them, would seem to justify. No history is soiled by more instances of perfidy than that of Spain. No government has ever made so light of its oaths and its most sacred engagements. From the reign of Ferdinand the Catholic, to the time of the administration of Cardinal Alberoni, every war, every public treaty, every relation between the government and the people, is marked by the most odious treachery. Their address, however, gained the admiration of the world, and they contrived to separate truth from honour.

There is now only one work of Cervantes which remains to be noticed, the *Galatea*, his earliest composition, which was published in 1584, in imitation of the *Diana* of Montemayor. After *Don Quixote*, this production is most generally known to foreigners. The translation, or rather

the imitation of it by Florian has rendered it popular in France. The Italians had already shewn a great taste for pastoral poetry; they did not, like the ancients, content themselves with writing eclogues, in which a single sentiment was developed in a dialogue between a few shepherds, without action, plot, or catastrophe. To the sweetness, the spirit, and the elegance which belong to pastoral productions, the Italians added romantic situations and powerful passions. They had composed several pastoral dramas, some of which have been presented to the notice of the reader in the earlier part of this work. The Spaniards had been still more deeply captivated by these pastoral fancies, which, by recalling to the mind the feelings of our childhood, accord admirably with the yielding indolence of southern feelings. Their drama in its origin was entirely pastoral. Incited by the same taste, they produced many long works, which were, in fact, nothing more than tedious eclogues. The six books of the *Galatea* form two octavo volumes, and yet these constituted only the first portion of the work, which was never finished. Florian soon perceived that a tale of this length would not be agreeable to the taste of his countrymen; and he therefore worked up the incidents while he abridged the romance, and while he retrenched the poetical portions, added to the general interest. Cervantes has been blamed for having

mingled too many episodes with the principal tale. It is said, that he has attempted too many complicated histories, and introduced too many characters, and that he has, by the quantity of incidents and names, confounded the imagination of the reader, who is unable to follow him. He is also blamed for having, in the earliest of his works, when he was yet comparatively ignorant of what constitutes purity and elegance of style, employed an involved construction which gives his work an appearance of affectation. I should be also inclined to impute it to him as a fault, though this accusation more properly falls upon the class than upon this individual work, that he is almost cloying in the sweetness and languor of his love-scenes. When we read these pastoral romances, we may imagine ourselves bathing in milk and honey. Notwithstanding these observations, the purity of its morals, the interest of its situations, the richness of invention, and the poetical charms which it displays, must ensure to the *Galatea* an honourable place in the list of Spanish classics.

Amongst the contemporaries of Cervantes there is one whose name is frequently repeated, and whose work has preserved considerable celebrity without being ever read. Don Alonzo de Ercilla was the author of the *Araucana*; a poem which has been sometimes cited as the only Spanish epic. This idea, however, is by no

means well grounded ; for there is not, perhaps, any nation which has more frequently attempted the epic style than the Spanish : indeed, the Castilians reckon thirty-six epic poems. It is true that none of these rise above mediocrity, or are worthy of being compared with the admirable productions of Camoëns, or Tasso, or Milton. Ercilla, however, has no greater pretensions than the rest, for we find nothing in his writings which can raise him absolutely above the ranks of his rivals. The Araucana would, in all probability, have been forgotten, together with the thirty-six pretended epics, if Voltaire had not chanced to bestow upon it some fresh celebrity. On the publication of his *Henriade* he subjoined an Essay on Epic Poetry, in which he reviewed the various poems which different nations had presented to dispute the epic palm. The Spaniards had nothing better than the Araucana, of which Cervantes had said, in his inventory of the library of Don Quixote, that it was one of the best poems in heroic verse which the Castilians possessed, and that it might be compared with the most famous productions of Italy. Voltaire examined it, and judged it with the more indulgence on account of its obscurity. He placed Ercilla, where we may well be astonished to find him, by the side of Homer, of Virgil, of Tasso, of Camoëns, and of Milton. He insisted upon his valour

and upon the dangers which the author had experienced, as though they added to his poetical merits; and in a favourable analysis he cited several passages which display real beauties. The longest is taken from the second canto: it is the speech of Colocolo, the oldest of the Caciques, who, surrounded by chiefs all aiming at the supreme power, calms the furious passions of his ambitious countrymen, and proposes a just and simple mode of choosing a commander in chief. Voltaire, in a comparison which he institutes between this speech and that of Nestor in the *Iliad*, gives the preference to the eloquence of the savage, and eagerly seizes upon this opportunity of placing his own, in opposition to a commonly received, opinion. If Ercilla is indebted to Voltaire for his celebrity, the obligation is in some degree reciprocal. In all probability the perusal of the *Araucana* suggested to the French poet the beautiful conception of his *Alzire*, and opened to his view the vast field which the sanguinary struggle between the Ancient and the New World, and the contrast between the independence of the Americans and the fanaticism of the Spaniards, afforded.

Don Alonzo de Ercilla y Zuñiga was born at Madrid, in 1533; or, according to other writers, in 1540. He accompanied Philip II., then Infant, as his page, into Italy, the Low Countries, and afterwards into England. From thence he pro-

ceeded, at the age of two-and-twenty, with the new Viceroy of Peru, to America. He had been informed that the Araucans, the most warlike people, who formed and still form a powerful republic, had thrown off the yoke to which, on the Spanish invasion, they had momentarily submitted. In this war he engaged with great ardour. It was a contest in which, even as a subaltern, no inconsiderable glory was to be acquired. The Araucans, who were governed by sixteen Caciques who possessed equal powers, did not recognize any single supreme chief, except in the event of war. Then it was that they submitted to the most rigorous discipline; they did not disdain to learn from their enemies the art of war; with a body of horse they opposed the cavalry of the Spaniards; in a short time they learned the use of fire-arms, and employed with great address those which they won from their enemies, though they were unable themselves to manufacture gunpowder. Their invincible courage, their discipline, and their contempt of death, qualified them to expel the Spaniards from their country. Fatal reverses, however, succeeded their first victories; and in the time of Alonzo de Ercilla, the Spaniards flattered themselves with the hopes of subduing the Araucans. It was in the middle of this war that Ercilla undertook, with all the ardour of youth, to compose an epic poem on it. This

idea he pursued in the midst of all the dangers and fatigues of the expedition. In a wild and uncultivated country, and in the presence of an enemy, his days and nights were passed in the open air. . He continued, nevertheless, the composition of his poem, noting down the adventures of the day, sometimes upon scraps of paper which he had by chance preserved, which would scarcely contain half a dozen lines, and sometimes on pieces of parchment or skin which he found in the cabins of the savages.

In this manner he completed the fifteen first cantos, or first part of his work. He was scarcely thirty years of age when he returned to Spain to indulge the fond idea, that he had secured his fame, both as a warrior and a poet. He anxiously waited for the grateful acknowledgments of his sovereign and his country; but the sullen monarch, to whom he dedicated his *Araucana*, deigned not to notice either his verses or his valour. Ercilla, humiliated by the neglect of his sovereign, believed that he might still by fresh efforts acquire sufficient renown amongst his countrymen to attract the attention of the court. He added a second part to his poem, and inserted in it the grossest flatteries of a prince, little entitled to praise, but who has yet been always regarded with enthusiasm by the Spaniards. In this second part he also related the most brilliant events of Philip's reign, and again waited with

impatience, *but in vain, for the honours and rewards which he conceived himself to have merited.* The Emperor Maximilian II. bestowed upon him, it is true, a chamberlain's key; but without adding to this honour any of those pecuniary acknowledgments of which Ercilla stood pressing in need. Depressed and discouraged, the poet forsook his own country, resolving to seek in foreign lands, and no doubt at the court of Maximilian, those rewards which Castile had refused to him. In his travels, during which he composed a third part of his poem, he dissipated the remainder of his fortune, and experienced, as he advanced in years, the hardships of poverty. Nothing is known of his history after his fiftieth year; but the conclusion of his poem shews him struggling with those misfortunes from which so few of the great poets of Spain have been exempt. After mentioning some new exploits and victories of Philip II., which would form a poetical theme, he renounces for himself so ungrateful a task; a task which has produced to him neither recompense, nor glory,* and with the following melancholy lines he disappears from our view :

* Ah ! who shall tell how oft the ocean's roar
I brav'd in every clime ; now spreading forth

* *Quantas tierras corrí, quantas naciones
Hacia el elado norte atravesando ;*

My daring canvass to the freezing North ;
 Now conquering on the far antarctic shore
 The Antipodes ; while in the changing skies
 Wondering I saw new constellations rise ;
 Now tempting unknown gulfs with daring prow,
 To snatch a wreath to bind thy royal brow,
 Where the cold southern zone the blissful day denies.

Ercilla concludes by declaring, that, renouncing a world which has ever deceived him, he will henceforward consecrate to God the small remains of life, and weep over his faults, instead of devoting himself to the Muses.

There is in the courage of Ercilla, in his adventures and his misfortunes, a sort of romantic attraction, which induces us to expect to find him a great poet as well as a great man. Unfortunately the Araucana does not confirm this favourable impression. Indeed it can scarcely be regarded as a poem : it is rather a history versified and adorned with descriptions, in which the author never rises into the true poetical sphere. The Spaniards appear to have always failed in the epic, in consequence of the false ideas of it which they have entertained. Lucan

Y en sus bajas antárticas regiones
 El antipoda ignoto conquistando.
 Climas pasé, mudé constelaciones,
 Golfos inabegables navegando,
 Estendiendo, señor, vuestra corona
 Hasta casi la austral frigida zona.

has always been in their eyes the model of epic poets. They seem to have thought that their duty consisted in relating historical facts in a more impressive manner than the historian; but they have never attended to the unity of interest and action, of the value of which they appear to have been unaware. They never distribute the incidents according to the impression which they wish to produce; suppressing, enlarging, and adding to them, according to the requisitions of an art which is essentially creative. They sacrifice every thing to historical accuracy; and yet it is not to that, but to poetical truth, that they ought to have attended. Ercilla prided himself upon his veracity and accuracy; he challenged even those who were best informed relative to the war of Arauco to point out a single error. His poem, therefore, is sometimes merely a rhymed gazette, which, not possessing the interest of novelty, is intolerably fatiguing. From the commencement, which he has imitated from Ariosto, he invokes Truth alone; he nobly tells us how faithful he will prove to her, but at the same time he shews us that to her he has sacrificed all the charm of poetry.

* Nor love, nor love's delights, th' impassion'd hour,
The tender thought, the heart's responsive throe,

* No las damas, amor, no gentilezas
De caballeros canto enamorados,

Nor lady fair, nor knight in amorous woe
 Waking the lute beneath the myrtle bow'r,
 Attract my Muse ; but deeds of highest name
 I sing ; when, waking at the call of Fame,
 Spain's valiant sons unsheath'd the glittering blade,
 And o'er the unsubdued Araucan laid
 The iron-burthen'd yoke, his spirit proud to tame.

Themes worthy of renown I shall rehearse :
 A people in the wilds of Nature bred,
 Who to a king ne'er bow'd the subject head ;
 Their deeds of bold emprise shall in my verse
 Be sung ; their native wealth, and fruitful soil,
 Enrich'd by industry, and patient toil ;
 And of their proud defence the Muse shall tell,
 How fir'd with freedom's flame the conquer'd fell,
 Adding new triumph to the conqueror's spoil.

And thou, illustrious Philip, deign receive
 My humble labours ; thy benignant smile

Ni las muestras, regalos, ni terneças
 De amorosos afectos y cuidados ;
 Mas el valor, los hechos, las proçças
 De aquellos Españoles csforçados
 Que a la cerviz de Arauco no domada
 Pusieron duro yugo por la espada.

Cosas diré tan bien harto notables
 De gente que a ningun rei obedecen,
 Temerarias empresas mêmorables
 Que celebrarse con raçon merecen ;
 Raras industrias, terminos loables,
 Que mas los Españoles engrandeccn,
 Pues no cs el vencedor mas estimado
 De aquello en que el vencido es reputado ?

Shall every sorrow from my heart beguile,
 And a rich guerdon to thy poet give :
 Truth prompts my song, nor from her sacred line
 All uncorrupted shall it e'er decline :
 Despise not thou the offering of the Muse,
 However poor ; nor gracious, oh refuse
 To lend thy royal name : her honours all are thine.

After having devoted two stanzas more to the dedication, Ercilla begins his poem with a description of Chili, which he gives, not in the language of the Muses, but with a prosaic exactness which even an historian might wish to decline, and to resign to the mere statistical writer. It is not only inconsistent with poetry, but even totally irreconcilable to all elevation of language :

- * Running from North to South, Chili extends
 Along the late discover'd Southern sea ;
 Between its eastern and its western ends,
 Measur'd across where it is found to be

Suplico os, gran Felipe, que mirada
 Esta labor, de vos sea recebida,
 Que de todo favor necesitada
 Quede con darse a vos favorecida ;
 Es relacion, sin corromper, sacada
 De la verdad, cortada a su medida.
 No desprecieis el don, aunque tan pobre
 Para que autoridad mi verso cobre.

- * Es Chile norte sùr de gran longura,
 Costa del nuèvo mar del sur llamado,
 Tendrà del l'este a oeste de angostura
 Cien millas, por lo mas ancho tomado.

The broadest, 'tis a hundred miles. It bends,
South latitude, from the twenty-seventh degree
To that point where the ocean's waves are met
By those of Chili, in a narrow strait.

Six more stanzas, nearly in the same style, complete the description of Chili and Arauco. Ercilla never perceived that in poetry it was necessary to paint the climate or the country; that he ought to have brought before our eyes the wild mountains of the Andes, in the bosom of which lived the Puelches, the most formidable tribe in the confederated Republic of Arauco, instead of simply informing us that the mountains were a thousand leagues in length; that he ought to have painted the varied hues of the vegetation, so different from that of Europe; the climate, which within a very short space presents all the extremes of heat and cold; in short, that all the various embellishments of the scene, to which he was about to introduce us, ought to have been presented to our view. At the opening of his epic, Ercilla shews that he knew not how to describe like a poet. He has even forgotten to reject the scientific words of north and south, east and west, which their foreign origin renders unpleasant in the Spanish lan-

Bajo del polo antartico, en altura
De veinte y siete grados prolongado,
Hasta dó el mar Oceano y Chileno
Mezclan sus agoas, por angusto seno

guage. His description of the manners of the Araucans, of their division into sixteen clans, under sixteen chieftains or Caciques, agrees exactly with the present condition of that warlike people, who compelled the Spaniards to respect their liberties. That description, however, is very fatiguing, because the forms of verse, if they do not facilitate the composition, contribute only to embarrass it; and when they are made use of in prosaic details, require amplifications and artificial expedients, which render them more heavy than mere prose.

The territory of Arauco had been conquered by Don Pedro de Valdivia, who founded there seven Spanish cities. The conquerors, however, soon rendered their yoke insupportable to the vanquished Araucans, who at length revolted, and assembled together for the purpose of naming their general or Toqui. It is in this assembly that Colocolo, the oldest of the Caciques, after delivering a long harangue*, pro-

[* M. de Sismondi informs us that this speech has been translated by Voltaire, who has expressed his admiration of it. This version, which is rather eloquent than faithful, has led Boutterwek to observe, that Voltaire could appreciate oratorical beauty, but had an imperfect perception of poetical excellence; a charge which M. de Sismondi repels with much warmth. The French translation is subjoined: *Tr.*]

poses an expedient worthy of a barbarous nation : that a heavy beam should be brought, and that the man who can bear the weight the

“ Caciques, illustres défenseurs de la patrie, le désir ambitieux de commander n'est point ce qui m'engage à vous parler. Je ne me plains pas que vous disputiez avec tant de chaleur un honneur qui peut-être serait dû à ma vieillesse, et qui ornerait mon déclin : c'est ma tendresse pour vous, c'est l'amour que je dois à ma patrie, qui me sollicite à vous demander attention pour ma faible voix. Hélas ! comment pouvons-nous avoir assez bonne opinion de nous-mêmes pour prétendre à quelque grandeur, et pour ambitionner des titres fastueux, nous qui avons été les malheureux sujets et les esclaves des Espagnols ? Votre colère, Caciques, votre fureur ne devraient-elles pas s'exercer plutôt contre nos tyrans ? Pourquoi tournez-vous contre vous-mêmes ces armes qui pourraient exterminer vos ennemis, et venger notre patrie ? Ah ! si vous voulez périr, cherchez une mort qui vous procure de la gloire ; d'une main, brisez un joug honteux, et de l'autre, attaquez les Espagnols, et ne répandez pas, dans une querelle stérile, les précieux restes d'un sang que les dieux vous ont laissé pour vous venger. J'applaudis, je l'avoue, à la fière émulation de vos courages ; ce même orgueil que je condamne, augmente l'espoir que je conçois. Mais que votre valeur aveugle ne combatte pas contre elle-même, et ne se serve pas de ses propres forces pour détruire le pays qu'elle doit défendre. Si vous êtes résolus de ne point cesser vos querelles, trempez vos glaives dans mon sang glacé. J'ai vécu trop long-temps ; heureux qui meurt sans voir ses compatriotes malheureux, et malheureux par leur faute ! Ecoutez donc ce que j'ose vous proposer ; votre valeur, ô Caciques ! est égale ; vous êtes tous également illustres

longest shall have the honour of commanding. All the Caciques successively make trial of their strength, but Caupolican, the son of Leocan, bears away the prize. During two days and nights he sustains the beam upon his shoulders, and when, on the third day, he throws it down, he shews the assembly, by the activity of his leap, on ridding himself of his burthen, that his vigour is not yet exhausted.

It was this Caupolican who animated for such a length of time the courage of the Araucans, who led them from victory to victory, and who, when subsequently overwhelmed by the fresh succours which arrived from Peru, still supported the constancy of his countrymen in the midst of their reverses. No inconsiderable interest might have been attached to the hero of the poem, and to the generous people whom he commanded; our sympathies might easily have been awakened in favour of these half-naked savages, who were compelled to contend against all the advantages which their superior know-

par votre naissance, par votre pouvoir, par vos richesses, par vos exploits; vos âmes sont également dignes de commander, également capables de subjuguier l'univers: ce sont ces présens célestes qui causent vos querelles. Vous manquez de chef, et chacun de vous mérite de l'être; ainsi, puisqu'il n'y a aucune différence entre vos courages, que la force du corps décide ce que l'égalité de vos vertus n'aurait jamais décidé."

ledge of the art of war gave to the Spaniards. But such neither was, nor ought to have been, the intention of Ercilla. His object was to interest the reader for the Castilians and for himself, for we frequently find him fighting valiantly in the midst of his countrymen. The composition is, in fact, rather a journal than an epic. Animated as he was by his martial ardour, he has yet failed to communicate any portion of his enthusiasm to the reader; he cannot make us enter into the cruel passions of the Spaniards; he cannot make us accessaries to their avarice and their fanaticism. We wade with pain through his long military details, all arranged in chronological order, through the history of his skirmishes, and the minute incidents which seem to require that we should be interested in the particular fortunes of every common soldier. As the conquest of America was attempted by a handful of Spaniards, every individual, in fact, possessed considerable importance, and might imagine that he singly influenced the fate of empires. This species of war, in which we see more of the soldier, and less of military evolutions, is, perhaps, the best fitted for the purposes of poetry; but in order to turn this circumstance to advantage, Ercilla ought to have described the individual adventures of the soldiers, or he ought to have excited our attention by introducing some strongly-marked characters,

or some prominent acts of heroism, which might dignify events intrinsically insignificant. The march of fourteen nameless soldiers, who are sent to reinforce the army of Valdivia, is a meagre subject for a whole canto of an epic poem.

The author's style varies in the three parts of which his work is composed. The first portion, comprising the fifteen cantos which he wrote in America, is the most purely historical, the most devoid of all adventitious ornament, and the most fatiguing from the minute details of the war which it presents. In the second part, which was written in Europe, *Er-cilla* was desirous of correcting the monotony of his subject, of which he had probably been made sensible, by the introduction of incidents possessing a greater degree of national interest, and which, at the same time, should be more gratifying to the vanity of the monarch to whom the poem was dedicated. In his seventeenth canto he describes the battle of St. Quentin, and in his twenty-fourth, that of Lepanto, without attempting however to connect them with his subject. The third and last part, which concludes with the thirty-seventh canto, exhibits more ornament, though in general foreign to the subject and misplaced. In this portion of the work we meet with the description of the wonderful art and the enchanted gardens of the magician *Fiton*, which

could never have belonged to the wild deserts of America. Magic itself is bound to observe poetical truth. In the twenty-eighth canto, the beautiful savage, Glaura, recounts to Ercilla her intrigues and adventures with Cariolan, in much the same terms, and with the same feelings, as might have been expected from a Spanish lady. Ercilla himself relates, during a long march, to his companions in arms, the true history of Dido, Queen of Carthage, whom Virgil, he says, has calumniated in making her die of love for Æneas. This narrative alone occupies the thirty-second and thirty-third cantos.

The course of the historical events, however, presents a sort of epic unity. The situation of the Spaniards in Arauco continues to grow more and more critical, until the moment of their receiving reinforcements from Peru, after which period they experience no reverses. The capture of the Araucan chief and his frightful punishment should have formed the termination of the poem. With that incident the present analysis concludes.

Caupolican, hunted from one retreat to another, and after every defeat again appearing in greater strength, is at length surprised and taken prisoner by the treachery of one of his soldiers. He voluntarily discovers his name to the Spaniards, and declares that he has the power of treating with them so as to bind the whole nation.

He engages that the Araucans shall with himself embrace Christianity, and submit to the dominion of Philip, and represents that his captivity may thus be the means of procuring peace to all Chili; but he announces to them at the same time, that if it is necessary, he is equally prepared for death:

- * Nor spoke the Indian more, but with an eye
Intrepid, and a spirit all elate,
With unblanch'd cheek, the last decree of fate
Calmly awaited; or to live or die
To him was equal; fortune's tempest dread
Could frown no further vengeance on his head;
Though bound a captive, and in fetters, still
Shone through his soul th' unconquerable will;
His aspect nobly bold, from innate valour bred.

Scarce had he told his name, than too severe
A doom was pass'd—precipitate resolve!
Impal'd, with arrows pierced, he should absolve
His love of country. But no dastard fear
Appall'd his spirit, no appealing look
For mercy cried: fortune he would not brook.
Though death against him rais'd his fiery dart,
With thousand torments arm'd, his valorous heart,
Nor secret dread, nor mortal shudder shook.

No dijo el Indio mas, y la respuesta
Sin turbacion, mirandole atendia;
Y la importante vida, o muerte presta
Callando, con igual rostro pedia;
Que por mas que fortuna contrapuesta
Procuraba abatirle, no podia,
Guardando, aunque vencido y preso, en todo,
Cierto termino libre, y grave modo.

- * Yet in a moment by God's awful power
 Upon his soul a mighty change was wrought;
 The light of faith beam'd on him, and he sought,
 Amid the perils of that mortal hour,
 To share the Christian's baptism, and the sure
 Promise of bliss, that ever shall endure!
 Castile's proud sons in joy and pity gaz'd,
 While the barbarian tribes stood all amaz'd,
 And gushing tears their warrior eyes obscure.
 And now arriv'd the sad though happy day,
 Which death and Christian baptism to him gave;
 Though that the body slew, yet this should save
 His parted spirit from corruption's sway.
 'Midst wondering crowds to death he then was brought,
 And the high doctrine of redemption taught,
 That bade him to resign his mortal breath,
 With firmest hope, to triumph over death,
 While on the life to come repos'd his silent thought.

Peró mudole Dios en un momento,
 Obrando en el su poderosa mano;
 Pues con lumbre de fé y conocimiento
 Se quiso bautizar y ser Christiano:
 Causo lastima, y junto gran contento
 Al circunstante pueblo Castellano,
 Con grande admiracion de todas gentes
 Y espanto de los barbaros presentes.

Luego aquel triste, aunque felice dia
 Que con solemnidad le bautizaron,
 Y en lo que el tiempo escaso permitia
 En la fé verdadera le informaron;
 Cercado de una gruesa compaña
 Di bien armada gente, le sacaron
 A padecer la muerte consentida,
 Con esperença ya de mejor vida.

His warrior brow no gorgeous feathers deck,
 His feet unsandall'd, to the silent plain
 Naked he came, dragging his weighty chain,
 That clasp'd with fell embrace his royal neck,
 Whence hung the hangman's rope. A martial band
 And hosts of bristling spears around him stand,
 And weeping crowds, who ask if this be true,
 The sorrowing sight that meets their shuddering view,
 This last sad triumph o'er their native land.

Thus to the bloody scaffold he drew nigh,
 That distant from the camp an arrow's flight,
 Raised on the plain, appeared before his sight,
 And to the gazing crowd was seen on high.
 Ascending then the stage, with brow elate,
 He saw the dread preparatives of fate;
 Saw, without change of temper or of blood,
 The armament of death, that round him stood,
 With placid mien, as in his free-born state.

Descalzo, destocado, a pié, desnudo,
 Dos pesadas cadenas arrastrando,
 Con una soga al cuello, y grueso ñudo
 De la qual el verdugo iba tirando :
 Cercado entorno de armas, y el menudo
 Pueblo detras, mirando y remirando
 Si era posible aquello que pasaba,
 Que visto por los ojos, aun dudaba.
 Desta manera pues, llegó al Tablado,
 Que estaba un tiro de arco del asiento,
 Media pica del suelo levantado,
 De todas partes a la vista esento.
 Donde con el esfuerço acostumbrado,
 Sin mudança y señal de sentimiento,
 Por la escala subio, tan desembuelto
 Como si de prisiones fuera suelto.

Now reach'd the summit, with an eye serene
From side to side he turns his gazing view,
Admiring the vast crowd that round him drew,
The sad spectators of the deathly scene;
Wondering, his people ask'd how fortune's might
Could hurl their monarch from his native height
Of glory; nor were bounds to their amaze,
While gathering fast around with tearful gaze,
They view the coming scene with terror and affright.

Then near unto the pointed stake he came,
Where he ere long should pour his mortal breath
In the dire conflicts of a torturing death:
But here no terrors shook his manly frame:
"Pleas'd I submit, since destiny hath cast
This bloody die; soon is the journey pass'd;
Contempt and proud despite shall arm my soul,"
He said, "to quaff misfortune's bitter bowl,
Nor feel we that dread stroke that comes the last."

Puesto ya en lo mas alto, rebolviendo
A un lado y otro la serena frente,
Estuvo alli parado un rato, viendo
El gran concurso y multitud de gente,
Que el increible caso y estupendo,
Atonita miraba atentamente,
Teniendo a marabilla, y gran espanto
Haver podido la fortuna tanto.
Llegose el mismo al palo, donde havia
De ser la atroz sentencia ejecutada;
Con un semblante tal que parecia
Tener aquel terrible trance en nada.
Diciendo: pues el hado, y suerte mia
Me tienen esta muerte aparejada,
Venga, que yo la pido, y yo la quiero,
Que ningun mal ay grande, si es postrero.

The busy hangman now approach'd his side
 To seize his prey, a branded negro slave,
 The wretched freightage of the Atlantic wave.
 This last indignity too deeply tried
 The Monarch's spirit, though with soul unmov'd
 He yet had every frown of fortune prov'd ;
 He could not brook, though in this bloody strife,
 So base an ending to his noble life,
 And all indignant thus the hostile chief reprov'd.
 " Oh deed unworthy of the Christian race !
 Is this your boasted honour, this the dower
 Of noble valour in her dying hour,
 To bid me perish by a hand so base ?
 Death is a full atonement, and life fled,
 We war no longer with the helpless dead :
 This is not death, but mockery and despise,
 Thus to afflict my spirit in her flight,
 And heap this dark dishonour on my head.

Luego llego el verdugo diligente,
 Que era un negro Geloffo mal vestido,
 El qual viendolo el barbaro presente
 Para darle la muerte prevenido,
 Bien que con rostro y animo paciente
 Las afrentas demas havia sufrido,
 Sufrir no pudo aquella, aunque postrera
 Diciendo en alta voz desta manera.

Como que en Christiendad, y pecho honrado
 Cabe cosa tan fuera de medida,
 Que a un hombre como yo, tan señalado,
 Le dé muerte una mano así abatida ?
 Basta, basta morir al mas culpado ;
 Que alfin todo se paga con la vida,
 Y es, usar de este termino con migo
 Inhumana vengança, y no castigo.

" Amidst your swords that now so silent rest,
 That drank my country's blood, and in the strife
 Of furious battle thirsted for my life,
 Can none be found to pierce my warrior's breast ?
 Whatever sorrows on my head descend,
 Whatever griefs my suffering heart may rend,
 Let not a slave's polluted touch disgrace
 Caupolican, the latest of his race ;
 Nor such a deed of shame his hour of death attend."

So spoke the indignant chief, and sudden turn'd
 Upon the miscreant slave, and though oppress'd
 With galling weight of fetters, on the breast
 He smote him fierce, and from the scaffold spurn'd.

Caupolican, whom the very men who were
 inflicting upon him the most atrocious punish-
 ment continually exhorted to patience and re-
 signation, repented of this act of impatience, or
 rather he summoned to his aid the heroism
 peculiar to the Americans; that imperturbable
 courage,* which enables them to triumph over

No hubiera alguna espada aqui de quantas
 Contra mi se arrancaran a portia ?
 Que usada a nuestras miseras gargantas
 Cercenara de un golpe aquesta mia ?
 Que aunque ensaje su fuerza en mi de tantas
 Maneras la fortuna en este dia,
 Acaba no podra que bruta mano
 Toque al gran general Caupolicano.
 Esto dicho, y alcando el pié derecho,
 Aunque de las cadenas impedido,
 Dió tal coz al verdugo, que gran trecho
 Le echó rodando a bajo, mal herido.

human malevolence. No longer offering any resistance*, he again assumed an air of indifference, whilst racked by cruel pains, he was set up as a mark for the arrows of the Castilians :

* Then from the ranks stepp'd forth a chosen band
Of archers, six in number, but as true
As death the feather'd weapons which they drew.
At thirty paces from the chief they stand ;
And though for many a year their bows had sped
Their bloody shafts, and strewn the field with dead,
Yet at so great a name a sudden fear
Their courage check'd : they felt the rising tear,
And from their trembling hearts their fainting spirits fled.

* Reprehendido el impaciente hecho,
Y el del subito enojo reducido,
Le sentaron despues con poca aiuda
Sobre la punta dela estaca aguda.

No el aguçado palo penetrante,
Por mas que las entrañas le rompiese,
Barrenandole el cuerpo, fu bastante
A que al dolor intento se rindiese.
Que con sereno termino y sembiente,
Sin que labio ni ceja retorciese,
Sosegado quedo, de la manera
Que si asentado en talamo estuviera.*

En esto, seis flecheros señalados,
Que prevenidos para aquello estaban,
Treinta pasos de trecho desviados,
Por orden y de espacio le tiraban ;
Y aunque en toda maldad ejercitados,
Al despedir la flecha vacilaban,
Temiendo poner mano en un tal hombre,
De tanta autoridad y tan gran nombre.

But cruel fortune, whose avenging hate
Had fill'd so deep the martyr's cup of woe,
That soon the bitter draught must overflow,
Herself now urg'd the bloody stroke of fate ;
And as her hand the straining bowstring press'd,
A hundred arrows pierced the chieftain's breast :
Nor fewer would suffice to free a way
For his great spirit from her home of clay,
And to his warrior soul give its eternal rest.

Mas fortuna cruel, que ya tenia
Tan poco por hacer, y tanto hecho,
Si tiro alguno avieso alli salia,
Forçando el curso le traia derecho ;
Y en breve, sin dexar parte vacia,
De cien flechas quedo pasado el pecho,
Por dó aquel grande espíritu hecho fuera,
Que por menos heridas no cupiera.

CHAPTER XXX.

On the Romantic Drama. Lope Felix de Vega Carpio.

IN treating of the various branches of the literature of the South, we have hitherto ventured to criticise, with the greatest freedom, authors whose reputation entitles them to the utmost respect. Without regard to mere arbitrary rules, we have not hesitated to express our praise or our censure, according to the impressions which we have received from the perusal of those works, which are admired as master-pieces of genius by other nations. If, in pursuing this course of criticism, we have exposed ourselves to the imputation of deciding in too peremptory a style, on subjects with which we have only a partial acquaintance, we may, perhaps on the other hand, justly claim the merit of candour and impartiality. By fully explaining the feelings with which we have been inspired by the study of individual works, we have discharged our duty with greater fidelity, than if we had only echoed the public sentiment, and added to the number of those who join with indifference the voice of common assent.

But the topic which it is now intended to discuss embraces considerations of peculiar delicacy. It cannot be altogether divested of national prejudices. On the subject of dramatic literature the nations of Europe have divided themselves into two conflicting parties; and, refusing to observe any degree of reciprocal justice, they exasperate each other with mutual insult and contempt. Each country has erected its favourite author into an idol, against whom all hostile criticism is prohibited. If the French pay their adorations to Racine, the English worship Shakspeare with no less devotion; while Calderon, in Spain, and Schiller, in Germany, are objects of equal veneration. To compare one of these authors with the others would be to offend at once all their admirers. Should it be practicable to point out a blemish in some favoured writer, it is not easy to urge the objection with success. Far from conceding the point, his partizans will convert into a beauty the fault which they cannot conceal. They imagine that the national honour depends upon a superiority which they hold to be too clear to admit of any question; for, in the warmth of controversy, the disputants reject the very idea that their own opinion may, by possibility, not be free from error.

It was our intention, in a work of this nature, to make an impartial display of the opposite systems adopted by different nations, and to ex-

plain the peculiar tenets of each, as well as to detail the arguments upon which they founded their attacks upon the theory of their adversaries. We would gladly have believed that we had shown ourselves equally sensible to the beauties of these opposite sects, and that, whilst we endeavoured to catch and to indicate the point of view in which our subject is seen by foreign nations, we had succeeded in avoiding their prejudices. Without asserting a jurisdiction over the rules of other schools, we have treated, with due severity, those writers, however illustrious, who rejected indiscriminately all rules alike. Leaving to every theatre the observance of its own practical laws, it has been our aim to overlook national systems, and to prefer the contemplation of a general theory of poetry, which may embrace them all. Our anxious wish to observe a strict impartiality has not been properly appreciated. By both parties we have been considered as avowing hostile opinions. While the English critics have rebuked with severity the preference, which, in speaking of Alfieri, we have given to the classical school, the French have censured with no less asperity the taste for the productions of the romance authors, which we have not attempted to disguise, whilst remarking on the works of Calderon. The result of our exertions to interfere with neither party, has been, that each has, in its turn, disavowed

us, and endeavoured to drive us into the arms of the other.

We shall, however, persist in our determination not to range ourselves under any party-banner. We shall repeat our appeal to the enlightened minds of those who decide upon all other questions with impartiality and justice. We would ask, how it happens that great nations, as highly civilized as ourselves, to whom it is not possible to refuse the merit of erudition, of correct taste, of imagination, of sensibility, and of every mental faculty essential to perfection in criticism or in poetry, should maintain an opinion diametrically opposite to our own on subjects which they understand quite as well as ourselves? Is it not manifestly true that different nations, in their estimate of the dramatic art, consider it in detached portions, and that each selecting some favourite quality, proportions its praise or censure to the degree in which this requisite has been observed or neglected by the author? From the nature of this art, a certain degree of improbability must be submitted to by all; but different countries disagree as to the particular concessions which must in this respect be made; and, whilst they shut their eyes to the established licenses of their own stage, they are mutually disgusted by those which are allowed in foreign theatres. It cannot be disputed that the law of intrinsic beauty and genuine taste is paramount

to all these national jurisdictions ; this law it is the business of a philosopher to explore. He will not fail to recognize its operation when he perceives the union of several rival nations in one common sentiment ; and he will draw a decided distinction between those rules of criticism which are of arbitrary dictation, and those which have their foundation in the very nature of things.

Although every nation possesses, with regard to dramatic literature, its own peculiar taste and rules, yet each may be arranged under one of the two banners which are now raised in opposition throughout all Europe. To distinguish these two conflicting systems, the epithets of *classical* and *romantic* have been employed ; terms to which it is perhaps difficult to attach any definite meaning. Those ancient authors, whose authority has been called to their aid by the French and the Italians, are denominated by them *classical*. Their own writers, when they have adhered with sufficient closeness to these models, have been honoured with the same appellation ; and a *classical* taste is descriptive of the greatest purity and perfection ; nor have the critics of Germany, of England, and of Spain, disputed the propriety of this term. They have acquiesced in bestowing the title of *classical* on every literary production which belongs to the Roman or to the Grecian School. But these nations, deeply imbued with the ideas and the feel-

ings of the middle ages, imagine that they possess a more valuable fund of poetry in their own antiquities than exists in those of foreign countries. Delighting in the study of their old popular traditions, they have hence formed that style of chivalric poetry which nourishes patriotic feelings, and which magnifies our ancestors so greatly in the eyes of their posterity. To this poetry the Germans have given the epithet of *romantic*, because the Romance language was that of the Troubadours, who first excited these new emotions; because the civilization of modern times commenced with the rise of the Romance nations; and because the chivalric poetry, like the Romance language, was stamped with the twofold character of the Roman world, and of the Teutonic tribes which subdued it. But whatever may have induced the Germans to adopt this name, a subject upon which they themselves hold various opinions, it is enough for us that they have thus appropriated it, and there is no reason why we should contest it with them.

This distribution into the classical and romantic schools was extended by the German critics to all the branches of literature, and even to the fine arts. But as the two systems are in no point so directly opposed to each other as in all that relates to the theatrical art, the term *romantic*, when it was adopted by the

French, was exclusively applied by them to that system of dramatic composition, which differed most essentially from their own. It may be readily conceived that the principles of the classical school are in direct hostility not only to that which is intrinsically wrong, but also to that which is only wrong as being forbidden by arbitrary rules. Of this circumstance the French critics have availed themselves. They have designedly confounded the universal rules of good taste with their own narrow laws; and they have distinguished the classical system as that which observes all the rules, and the romantic as that which disregards them all. Because a new species of composition has arisen amongst them, the melodrame, remarkable only for its false and exaggerated sentiment, its improbability, and its violation alike of classical rules and of natural good sense, it is immediately asserted that the melodrame belongs to the romantic school. Because indifferent authors, in every branch of letters, revolt against the rules which they are unable to observe, it is maintained that the romantic system is destitute of all genius, and that the poetry which constitutes the delight of the English, of the Germans, and of the Spanish, may be best described as a simple negation of all the beauties of French poetry. Amongst other inconveniences, it is to be observed that this mode of reasoning may be

turned with full effect against those who employ it. The theatre of other civilized nations has also its rules, however they may differ from our own. With some of these the French have thought proper to dispense, for the purpose of introducing some stage-effect, which they consider as preferable; while the Germans, the English, and the Spanish, on the other hand, regard the French theatre as utterly devoid of that truth, that life, and that poetical colouring which they so much admire.

In pursuing, then, our inquiry into the system of the romantic drama, we shall regard it as it has been developed by its admirers, and, above all, by the German critics, in their remarks as well on the works of the Spanish and of the English as on their own authors. We shall investigate the abstract tendency of its principles, before we inquire how those principles have been practically enforced; and we shall endeavour to discover rather what has been intended, than the success with which the attempt has been accompanied. The most zealous partisans of the Romance writers are not so bigoted as to deny that they have their faults, or to attempt to convert those very faults into authorities.

In one point, at least, all countries have fully agreed. The dramatic art is considered by them all as an imitation of nature, which brings before our eyes actions and events which occurred, or

which might possibly have occurred, without witnesses, in times long past, and in places far remote. By presenting us with a lively representation of the play of human passions, it affords us at once improvement and delight. In order to adapt the sentiments and passions of the scene to those of the spectator, and to impart instruction with effect, the observation of some degree of truth is indispensable. But as we are thus introduced to scenes which, in the ordinary course of events, we never could have witnessed, we must to a certain extent acquiesce in improbabilities. By whatever system it may be regulated, the stage is always an enchanted spot; and, when we have permitted the magician to transport us by his art to Athens or to Rome, we have scarcely left ourselves the right of objecting to the farther exercise of his powers.

The object which the dramatist means to represent, must determine the degree to which truth and probability may be violated, on introducing historical facts or real personages into the precincts of the art. Nor must it be forgotten, that in all the imitative arts, the copy should never present us with an exact transcript of the original. It would appear that a portion of the pleasure which we derive from this source, consists in observing, at the same time, the points of difference as well as of coincidence. It would be

absurd to paint a statue and to array it in real garments. The picture which has all the advantage of colours, is never brought out in relief. Upon the same principle the drama ought not to correspond, in every respect, with the scenes which we daily witness in real life. The mimic powers of the art are not without their bounds; and it is even necessary that its deceptions should not be altogether concealed from our view.

According to all the commentators upon the drama of the Greeks, that species of composition always commenced with the chorus. This lyrical portion of the poem, improbable in itself, but at the same time more highly poetical than the rest, was the first source of delight to the spectator. In the chorus, the poet placed his principal glory; and, through this medium, the sentiments of the assembled people were expressed. On the merit of the chorus depended the success of the tragedy. In the estimation of the Greeks, the manners, the characters, the passions, the incidents, and the catastrophe, were of very subordinate interest. With them the action of the drama admitted of great brevity. The catastrophe alone, with the assistance of the chorus, was sufficient to occupy the theatre. For this reason we find that, of all those subjects which the Greeks selected for the stage, and which have reached our times, the greater part would not supply sufficient action for a modern play. We

look in vain for a regular plot and a catastrophe. We find only a developement of the story in beautiful lyrics. It necessarily results that the Greek tragedies are confined to very strict limits, and comprise but a few hours. Yet their authors were far from observing those limits with the severity which is so much insisted upon at the present day.

At the period of the reformation of the French theatre, under the auspices of Louis XIV., the national taste had been perverted by those romantic reveries which formed the only literary studies in the fashionable classes of society. The long romances of *La Calprenède* and of *Scudéry*, of which we now know little more than the names, were then eagerly perused by the courtier as well as by the citizen. To adapt subjects of ancient history to the taste of those who then decided on the merit of dramatic attempts, it was necessary to invest them with a sentimental disguise, which, although it is now regarded as in the highest degree ridiculous, was esteemed at that time to be an indispensable requisite. Men of real genius, and Racine in particular, who far excelled all others, after having deeply imbibed the genuine and masculine beauties of classical antiquity, were called upon to resuscitate them before an audience which was only acquainted with them through the medium of their romantic interpretation. It is erroneous to

conclude that the talents of Racine were exclusively adapted to the expression of tenderness and love. The fact is, that these sentiments alone were required from him by the spirit of the age. In point of time and place, an intrigue of the romantic drama is, almost of necessity, extremely confined. Racine found the rules already established, which prescribed twenty-four hours as the duration of the action, and fixed the scene to a single spot. The operation of these rules gave him little concern; for a compliance with them, on his part, was a work of no difficulty. His claims to our admiration are not built upon this foundation. The subjects which he was compelled to treat, were capable of being restricted to very narrow bounds. But we cannot too highly applaud the prodigious genius which has enabled him to exalt these subjects, and to place the productions drawn from the Romance writers of that age on a level with the most glorious creations of ancient Greece.

In the writings of Racine, however, the French theatre displays some improbabilities with which foreign critics have often reproached it. For ourselves, so completely are we reconciled to them by the genius and authority of the poet, that we cannot even perceive them. Thus, he has systematically blended together manners so totally opposed to each other as those of the chivalric ages and of ancient Greece.

Nothing can possibly be more distinct than the language of Romance, loaded as it is with titles of honour and terms of servile respect, and the dignified simplicity of the antique. In addition to this, the English particularly condemn his invariable custom of uniting heroic verse with rhyme, and of conveying his sentiments in a strain of language so uniformly elevated as almost entirely to suppress the abrupt and natural impulses of the mind.

Under such artificial regulations, it is asserted, by foreign nations, that truth and nature can never be found. To this position let us be allowed to reply, that such amongst us are the settled rules of the art; that we imitate nature, not under her prosaic, but under her poetical forms; and that, as the sculptor gives animation to the marble block, so our great masters of verse have infused life into the monotonous and stately alexandrine.

It was the custom of the Spaniards to represent on the stage, not only the great incidents of their national history, but also those complicated intrigues, those feats of dexterity and turns of fortune, which delighted their imagination and reminded them of their Moorish romances, which were infinitely more fertile in adventures than those of the French. The English, who had only just emerged from a state of civil warfare, and were on the point of plunging into it once

more, preferred the representation of those more potent passions, which influence public men. They dwelt with delight on the exhibition of deep and energetic characters, struggling under the most momentous circumstances, and they loved to contemplate the course of the statesman through the career of national events. Possessing greater information and more steadiness than either of these nations, the Germans aimed at reviving on their stage the scenes of real history, in their natural colours. In their characters, in their language, and in the train of events, they particularly insisted on the observance of truth and reality. They seemed to lay a strict injunction on the poet, that he should conceal nothing from their view.

Proposing to themselves the attainment of objects so different from our own, these three nations required, in the action of their dramas, greater latitude both of time and space. Neither the Eastern fictions of the first, nor the political and historical pieces of the others, could be subjected to the rule of the four-and-twenty hours. In the management of such subjects, it was necessary either to confine the scenic representation to the catastrophe alone, or to substitute recitals in the place of action—an arrangement which is destructive of all dramatic effect; or to permit the poet to compress the lapse of time before the eyes of the spectators. The essence

of the romantic system consists, then, in the privilege which it has granted to the dramatist of condensing successive events on the same scene and into the same day, by a kind of theatrical magic; upon the same principle that the magic of the fancy enables us to survey the same events in their proper colours, upon the perusal of a few brief pages, and in the lapse of a few short hours.

Against this licence of the romantic stage, of which the ancients perhaps declined to avail themselves only because they could not change their scenery nor dispense with the presence of the chorus, the authority of Aristotle and the argument of probability have been strongly urged. With respect to the authority of the Stagyræite, the advocates of the romantic school seem to reply, with good reason, that his doctrine of the unities is contained in a very obscure treatise, of the genuineness of which some doubts may be entertained. Nor, it is farther contended, is it easy to explain why the name of Aristotle, which on philosophical questions was once esteemed all-powerful, should ever have been allowed much weight in the solution of poetical difficulties. To a nice perception of the fine arts, his dry, methodical, and calculating genius must have rendered him an utter stranger; and the faith which is yet extended to his oracular judgments, is nothing more than a relic of that usurped dominion, which, three centuries since, he exer-

cised over ~~all~~ the schools and over every branch of the human understanding.

Nor have the same critics less forcible reasons to urge, on the question of probability. It is readily admitted, they observe, that the scene of these representations is a stage, open on one side to our observation; that the actors, instead of being absorbed in their own feelings and business, address themselves to the audience; that they speak our native language, and not that of the characters which they have assumed; that the latter, although often supposed to be natives of different countries, uniformly speak the same language; and that the theatre represents, at the pleasure of the dramatist, the time and the place to which the action of his piece relates. Having carried our concessions to this point, can the tragedian be said to trespass too far, when, like Azor, in the opera of Marmontel, he assumes the power of laying open to our inspection, with his magic ring, the different edifices and places where the train of events, which we are in so supernatural a manner admitted to behold, is transacting? When a particular fact has required, in point of historical truth, a long space of time, and a transition to various countries, for its accomplishment, the spectator is reduced to a choice between inconvenience on the one hand, and improbability on the other. If he does not determine to follow the course of time, and the

regular succession of places, he must permit the author to collect his personages in the same apartment, and to effect all their operations in the short space of time occupied by the representation. We shall then find conspiracies organized at the very foot of the throne; and we shall see the conspirators meet, disperse, and re-assemble, in the prosecution of their plans, within the lapse of three hours, in violation not of truth and probability alone, but of possibility itself. It cannot be contended that one of these methods is more repugnant to probability than the other, provided the time is supposed to elapse and the scene is changed, whilst the curtain is dropped and the illusion is, for a moment, suspended. This mode is adopted even upon the French theatre, where the imaginary extent of time allowed to a representation, is arbitrarily fixed at twenty-four hours. It must, however, be confessed that, in the romantic plan, every change of scene produces a momentary dissipation of the deception. Having once transported ourselves into another time, and country, we lose all recollection of this first act of the imagination, and, thinking no longer of ourselves, we live in the fictions of the drama. On the occurrence of a change of scene, we are restored to our consciousness, and we begin to consider into what country we have been carried, what time has passed since the last scene, and what new

exertion of imagination the author will next require. The latter, on his part, finds himself compelled to enter into new explanations, to suspend the scene in order to make us acquainted with the intermediate incidents, and thus to retard the progress of the action. But it cannot be doubted, on the other hand, that, from this enlarged licence, the most striking effects are elicited. Instead of long and cold narrations, every important scene may, by this means, be brought on the stage; much greater truth is given to the picture of manners; and the poet, introducing us into the interior of every mansion, penetrates more effectually into the secrets of the heart. Subjects of the greatest magnitude may be represented; and mighty revolutions are no longer confounded with paltry intrigues, which are concerted and developed in the course of a few hours, and with the aid of trifling expedients.

We certainly attach too much force to the authority of our three great tragedians, when we oppose the dramatic rules of the French school to those of all other nations, and pass an unqualified censure upon the latter. It is not to these great writers that we owe the regulations of our stage. These were established long before, by authors of no extraordinary talent, who were then in possession of the stage. In the year 1552, Jodelle, in his *Cleopatra*, observed these rules with scrupulous exactness; and

from that period the herd of critics no longer admitted of any deviation. Yet Corneille, when he composed the finest of all his works, the *Cid*, had but a very confused idea of them, and consequently incurred the severe animadversions of the erudite. Nor, in the best of his succeeding pieces, in *Les Horaces* and *Cinna*, did he observe either the unity of action or that of interest. The hostile criticism which he encountered, forced, at last, upon his notice those rules which have been sanctified by the bigotry of the learned; but it is unfortunate that in the very instances in which he has most closely adhered to them, his efforts are least worthy of his high reputation. Racine, again, found subjects of love, of intrigue, and of gallantry, in almost exclusive possession of the French stage. To this prevalent spirit of the age he was compelled to submit, and, as topics of this nature require neither length of time, nor a wide range of places, for their developement, he felt very little inconvenience from the observance of the three unities, while labouring under the much more formidable difficulty of exhibiting only amorous heroes. With the most pathetic eloquence, with the most irresistible truth, and with the most exquisite sensibility, he pourtrayed all that is affecting and tragical in love. But the rules to which he conformed and which he rendered subservient to the production of such inimitable beauties, be-

longed, not so much to himself, as to Pradon, who in the public estimation, was still more gallant, more romantic, and consequently, more perfect. At a much later period, Voltaire found himself still more narrowly circumscribed by these rules of art, which it was always the endeavour of little minds to draw closer. He exerted himself to procure for the drama a wider range; and he attempted paths which had hitherto been regarded by the French as impracticable. Gallantry was excluded from his scenes, and love was only retained in its tragic character. He drove from the stage that crowd of spectators, whose presence, being destructive of all pomp, decoration, and animated action, reduced the tragedy, of necessity, to a mere formal dialogue. Different nations, in all their variety of manners and of costume, are presented to us, instead of the ever-repeated mythology of the Greeks. We are affected by the sentiments of personages of our own religion and of our own country. Yet did Voltaire experience incessant embarrassment from the rules which he found established on our stage. History cannot possibly be subjected to the limits of the four-and-twenty hours; and from history, therefore, he was altogether precluded. The plots of most of his tragedies, and amongst these of his most admirable pieces, of *Zaïre*, of *Alzire*, of *Mahomet*, and of *Tancréd*, are altogether fictitious. Nor

did the fables of mythology afford him a greater choice of subjects. In his remarks upon his *Œdipus*, he observed to M. de Genonville, that this sterile subject might possibly suffice for one or two scenes, but certainly not for a whole tragedy. He expressed a similar opinion of the *Philoctetes*, of *Electra*, and of *Iphigenia in Taurida*. This observation might, indeed, be extended to almost all those tragedies of the highest class, in which, with a strict observation of the classical rules, the catastrophe alone is introduced upon the stage, whilst the intricacies of the plot, and indeed the whole action of the piece, are comprised in recitals which are rather of an epic than of a dramatic nature. In the romantic system, the first act of the fable would properly commence on the day when Œdipus, driven from the altars of Corinth, and branded by the imputations of a dreadful oracle, quitted his country, to prevent the possibility of committing the threatened crime, and to pursue the path of glory which had been traced by Hercules. The second act would comprise his meeting with Laius, and the assassination of that king. In the third we should discover him at Thebes, and witness the deliverance of that city from the fury of the Sphinx. The fourth would shew us the fatal rewards which are bestowed upon him by the people; the throne of Laius, and the hand of his widow. These are the necessary steps in

the tragedy, and the constituent parts of its action. Upon these are founded all the anxiety and all the terror of the catastrophe, which in itself is only sufficient to occupy the fifth act. All these previous parts of the action, which cannot be arranged under any unity of time or of place, are not less essential to the classical tragedy than to that of the romantic school. They are all introduced by Voltaire into his play; but to effect this, he has made the first four acts consist of mere recitals, which are addressed, for the most part, by Œdipus to Joeasta. A dramatist of the Romance school, who assumes the privilege of shewing us different places, and of carrying us through successive periods of time, with the same freedom as a writer of romances, an epic poet, or any individual who describes events real or imaginary, would have placed all these incidents before our eyes. Had he possessed the genius of Voltaire, he would have produced the most striking effect from the scene of the Temple, and from that of the death of Laius, which, even in a forced and declamatory recital, make so strong an impression. The French manner of treating the subject, to which Voltaire has adhered, is, it is true, far more artificial. But the poet should not purchase this advantage at the expense of too great sacrifices. Voltaire has, in his Œdipus, fallen into this error; and, for the sake of preserv-

ing the unities of time and place, he has violated all the rest. In the first instance, the abridgement of the proper action of the piece having rendered the subject too slight, he was compelled to introduce a subsidiary plot, which almost entirely occupies the three first acts; the arrival and the danger of Philoctetes, under the suspicion of being the assassin of Laius. If the action be double, the interest also is divided. The mutual love of Jocasta and of Philoctetes has no kind of connexion with the feelings excited in favour of Œdipus. If it is intended to interest us, it is a breach of the unity. If it fails in awaking our sympathy, it is a very unfortunate digression. Considered in any other light, this attachment is still more objectionable. In a drama which is founded on incidents of so dreadful a nature, the passion of love, of whatever description it may be, must necessarily destroy the unity of its tone and complexion. When we are absorbed in the fate of a hero, who has innocently perpetrated the crimes of parricide and incest, we are not much disposed to listen to the effusion of lovesick sentiments. But, more than this, the upity of manners is in this instance equally violated. These, in Greece, should have been represented with strict regard to national truth. The love professed by a knight for a princess, in the midst of a splendid court, is here out of place. The early princes of Greece

held no courts; their wives and daughters, in the time of Homer, were not queens and princesses; nor was Philoctetes formed in the school of Amadis. The unity of manners, indeed, is more than any other completely sacrificed. The most essential part of the action, upon which the interest is founded, and which ought, above all others, to affect the feelings of the audience, is entirely withdrawn. Long recitals are introduced in its place, clothed in the language, and subject to the rules, of epic poetry. But our object on visiting the theatre is to receive impressions by the eye, as well as by the ear, and to enter, with all the energy of our souls, into the action presented before us. If, on the contrary, we would give its full effect to a mere narration, we ought to seek the solitude and silence of the closet. When our senses are no longer excited, and when our imagination is undisturbed by the intervention of any real object, the mind will most successfully create its own theatre, and bring to our view the objects described by the poet.

The tragedy of *Œdipus* was written while Voltaire was yet very young. In the maturity of his genius he would not have fallen into the errors which have been here pointed out. But, at the same time, it is probable that he would not then have written on the subject of *Œdipus*. It would have occurred to him, that this drama could not be treated with strict regard to the

unities, by any but Greek authors. By them the chorus and the lyrical portion of the work, which we have entirely excluded, were regarded as the essence of the tragedy; and they were thus enabled to dispense with the action. But it was subsequent to the composition of *Zaïre*, that Voltaire wrote his *Adelaide du Guesclin*. In this piece he designed to give an example of a tragedy entirely French, and to excite the feelings of the spectators by the introduction of the most distinguished names of the monarchy, and by the recollection of the most chivalric and poetical of all its wars. But, by the difficulties resulting from the rule which confines the time of action to twenty-four hours, he was compelled to adopt a plot of mere invention; and, instead of deriving any advantage from the charm of national associations, he turned these very circumstances against himself; a necessary consequence, when those associations are at perpetual variance with the gratuitous inventions of the poet.

The rules of the French theatre, by compelling the dramatist to draw his resources almost entirely from the heart, to the exclusion of incident, have given rise to many masterpieces; because men of the highest genius, restricted to these limits, have depicted the depth of sentiment and the impetuosity of passion, with a degree of truth, precision, and purity of taste, unequalled by any other nation. They are, how-

ever, compelled to forego that which is the end and object of the romantic tragedy. Their drama is not, like that, the school of nations, wherein they may learn under a poetical guise the most brilliant portions of their history; where they may animate themselves by the contemplation of ancestral honours, of glory, and of patriotism, till they have engraved upon their hearts, by beholding with their own eyes, the imposing lessons of past ages.

Unity of action is essentially requisite in every drama, as indeed in every intellectual creation. This it is which gives us the clear perception of harmony and beauty, which captivates our attention, and which preserves the due relation between the whole and the several parts. It is this unity which establishes bounds, though with considerable latitude, to discrepancies of time and place. The distance of time naturally suggests to the imagination a number of intermediate actions between one scene and another, of interests created or destroyed, and of changes in the relation of affairs, which embarrass and fatigue the mind. It is necessary, therefore, that the spectator, in following the persons of the drama from place to place, and day after day, should always be occupied with one single idea, and should consider the actors as engaged with the interests of the drama. If he should imagine them employed upon other actions unknown

to himself, those actions, in which it is impossible that his mind can be interested, distract his attention, and weaken the effect of the drama upon his mind by withdrawing it from the unity of the subject. We shall have occasion to remark that these boundaries have been ill preserved in the romantic theatre, and that the liberty which gave rise to this poetical innovation has but too frequently degenerated into licence.

These observations are not applicable to the Spanish theatre only; they may be applied to all foreign literature, with the exception only of the Italian. All the northern, as well as the southern nations, have refused to submit to the pretended dominion of Aristotle; and it will be impossible for us to relish the charms of their literature if we do not possess a previous acquaintance with their critical canons, and if we learn not to judge of their drama by the rules which their own poets have proposed to themselves, and not according to our own prejudices.

With regard to the Spaniards, as far as we have hitherto examined their literature, we have seen that it is much less classical than that of other nations; that it is much less formed upon the model of the Greeks and the Romans, less subjected to the laws and criticism of literary legislators, and, in short, that it has preserved a

more original and independent character. It is not that the Spanish writers have possessed no models to follow, or that they have never been imitators, for their earliest masters were the Arabians. It was from the Arabians that they derived their elder poetry. In the sixteenth century, their mixture with the Italians gave a new life, as it were, to their literature, and changed both its spirit and its form. It is a singular fact, that they who introduced the riches of foreign lands into the literature of Castile, were not scholars but warriors. The Spanish Universities, numerous, rich, and powerful as they were by their privileges, were altogether subject to monastic influence. The principal of these privileges was then, as it still is, the right of refusing to follow the progress of science, and of maintaining all ancient abuses and obsolete modes of instruction as their most precious patrimonies. Spain took little part in that zealous cultivation of the learning and poetry of the ancients, which gave so much life to the sixteenth century. Amongst her poets no one is distinguished for his scholastic reputation, or for his excellence in Greek or Roman composition. On the contrary, they were generally warriors, whose active and elevated souls sought even a wider range than that of martial action. Boscan, Garcilasso, Diego de Mendoza, Montemayor, Castillejo, and Cervantes, all distinguished them-

selves in the field. Don Alonzo de Ercilla traversed the Atlantic and the Straits of Magellan, seeking glory and danger in another hemisphere. Camoëns, amongst the Portuguese, was a sailor and soldier, as well as a poet. This alliance between arts and arms produced two effects on the literature of Spain, which were equally advantageous. In the first place, it conferred a noble, valorous, and chivalric character upon the writings of the Spaniards; a character rare in every nation, where the sedentary life of the poet enfeebles his spirit; and secondly, it divested their imitations of every appearance of pedantry. The Castilians, indeed, borrowed from other nations, more especially from the Italians; but they were only imperfectly acquainted with what they borrowed, and therefore, when they wished to avail themselves of it, they modified and adapted it to their own ideas. The Arabians, the first instructors of the Spaniards, were ignorant of the drama; the Provençals and the Catalans had very little more knowledge of it; nor could the Spaniards themselves boast of a theatre before the time of Charles V. They studied very slightly, and thought still less of imitating the classical drama; but their officers had beheld, in the wars of Italy, the theatrical representations which adorned the Court of Ferrara, and of other Italian princes. In emulation of these spectacles they attempted to establish

something resembling them amongst themselves, and to introduce into their own country an amusement which was the ornament of those nations in which they had borne arms.

The Italian dramas were in verse, though not of the most harmonious kind, and it was soon found that the language possessed no good dramatic metre. The Spaniards united an Italian metre to their own national verse—the redondilhas, or the trochaic verses of eight syllables, in which their ancient romances were written. The dialogue, whenever vivacity is demanded, is in redondilhas, sometimes rhymed in quatrains, sometimes in stanzas of ten lines; occasionally with assonants in the second lines; but always with a lyrical movement, the verse being that which forms the most impassioned measure of the French ode. Whenever the dialogue rises to eloquence, or the poet wishes to give it dignity and grandeur, he employs the heroic verse of the Italians either in octaves or tercets; and whenever one of the characters expresses some sentiment, or comparison, or detached reflection, which has been suggested to him, the poet gives it in the shape of a sonnet.

The choice of these various metres has produced a more extensive effect than we should at first imagine, upon the drama of Spain. In other languages it seems to have been the object of the authors to make the verse of their dramas resemble eloquent prose. They attempt to give

their language the tone of nature, and to compel every character to speak as a real individual would express himself under the same circumstances. The Spaniards, on the contrary, having made choice of lyric and heroic metres, endeavoured, above every thing else, to give a poetical character to their dramas. Their object was not to represent what the situation of the characters demanded, but to adapt the subject-matter to the form which they had selected. Lyrical verse would be ridiculous, unless sustained by richness and grandeur of imagery. The same is the case with heroic verse, unless it conveys corresponding sentiments. The *ottava rima* would be misplaced, if the sentence was not proportioned to the length of the metre; and lastly, the sonnets must be clothed with that sententious pomp, and polished with those *conceitti*, which are the distinctive characteristics of that class of poems. It was necessary to pass from one of these metres to another; it was necessary that they should all be found in the same tragedy; nor did any question arise whether it was natural that the characters, amid the tumults of passion, the commotions of terror, and the anguish of grief, should employ the most far-fetched comparisons to express a common idea. The only question was, whether a good sonnet was not thus produced. They did not require dramatic but lyrical probability, which is much

more easily obtained. They did not regard a long speech, with reference to the circumstances in which the speaker was placed, or to the impatience of the spectators, or of the other characters. They inquired merely whether the lines were intrinsically good and poetical; and, if they were, they were applauded. In short, they never considered the relation of the parts to the whole, but the perfection of the parts themselves; they lost sight of the unity of the composition in admiring its details, and in their love of art they entirely abandoned nature.

The Italian poets, before Alfieri, generally laid the scene of their dramas in ancient times or in distant countries. The Spanish poets, on the contrary, are essentially national. The greater part of their pieces are drawn from their own times, and from the history of Spain. Those in which the scene is laid in other countries or in fabulous times, still give us a representation of their own manners. They thus possess the advantage of displaying a more animated and faithful picture of nature than the Italian dramas, which are all conventional. The Spanish theatre bears the strong impress of those illustrious times in which it flourished, when the pride of the nation was roused by its victories, and its military spirit shone in every composition. As liberty had been lost for upwards of a century, the gentlemen of Spain placed their pride in chivalry.

They became romantic, as it was no longer in their power to be heroic, and entertained exaggerated notions upon the point of honour, which in noble souls fills the place of patriotism, when that sentiment has ceased to exist. The poet, when he represented past times, did not dare to invest his cavaliers with the independence which their fathers had enjoyed. He endowed them with all his own political fears, and his own religious superstitions. He painted them as obedient to their kings, submissive to their priests, and full of a slavish spirit at which the ancient nobles of Castile would have blushed. Notwithstanding these unfaithful representations, the Spanish theatre still exhibits pictures every way worthy of exciting our liveliest curiosity.

We have already seen in a former chapter what, according to Cervantes, was the origin of the Spanish theatre, and what Cervantes himself accomplished in its cause. We have likewise seen how he admired the genius of the man, who, in his time, created as it were the drama of his country, and alone gave birth to more theatrical compositions than perhaps the united literature of all other nations can produce. Lope Felix de Vega Carpio was born at Madrid on the twenty-fifth of November, 1562, fifteen years after Cervantes. His relations, who were noble, though poor, gave him a liberal education. In consequence of their death before he visited the uni-

versity, he was ~~went thither~~ by the Inquisitor-General, ~~Don Jeronimo Manriquez~~, Bishop of Avila, and ~~he completed his studies~~ at Alcala. Prodiges of imagination and learning are related of him at this early period. The Duke of Alva, soon after his marriage, took him into his employment as secretary; but being forced into an affair of honour, he wounded his adversary dangerously, and was compelled to seek his safety in flight. He passed some years in exile at Madrid, and on his return lost his wife. The grief which he felt upon this occasion, added to his religious and patriotic zeal, drove him into the army, and he embarked on board the Invincible Armada, which was intended to subdue England, but which only fixed Elizabeth more firmly upon the throne. On his return to Madrid, he again married, and for some time lived happily in the bosom of his family; but the death of his second wife determined him to renounce the world and enter into orders. Notwithstanding this change, he continued to the end of his life to cultivate poetry with so wonderful a facility, that a drama of more than two thousand lines, intermingled with sonnets, *terza rima*, and *ottava rima*, and enlivened with all kinds of unexpected incidents and intrigues, frequently cost him no more than the labour of a single day. He tells us himself that he has produced more than a hundred plays; which were represented within four and twenty

hours after their first conception.* We must not forget what we have before said of the wonderful facility of the Italian improvisatori; and it is not more difficult to compose in the Spanish metres. In the time of Lope de Vega, there existed many Castilian improvisatori, who expressed themselves in verse with the same ease as in prose. Lope was the most remarkable of those improvisatori; for the task of versification seems never to have retarded his progress. His friend and biographer Montalvan, has remarked that he composed more rapidly than his amanuensis could copy. The managers of the theatres, who always kept him on the spur, left him no time either to read or to correct his compositions. He thus, with inconceivable fertility, produced eighteen hundred comedies and four hundred *Autos sacramentales*; in all two thousand two hundred dramas, of which about three hundred alone have been published in twenty five volumes in quarto. His other poems were reprinted at Madrid in 1776 under the title of the Detached Works (*Obras Sueltas*) of Lope de Vega, in twenty-one volumes in quarto. His prodigious literary labours produced Lope almost as much money as glory. He amassed a hundred thousand ducats, but his treasures did not long

* Pues mas de ciento, en horas veynte y quatro,
Pasaron de las musas al teatro.

abide with him. The poor ever found his purse open to them; and that taste for pomp, and that Castilian pride which is gratified by extravagance and embarrassments, soon dissipated his wealth. After living in splendour, he died almost in poverty.

No poet has ever in his lifetime enjoyed so much glory. Whenever he shewed himself abroad, the crowd surrounded him, and saluted him with the appellation of the *prodigy of nature*. Children followed him with cries of pleasure, and every eye was fixed upon him. The religious College of Madrid, of which he was a member, elected him their president, (*Capellan mayor*.) Pope Urban VIII. presented him with the Cross of Malta, the title of Doctor of Theology, and the diploma of Treasurer of the Apostolic Chamber; marks of distinction which he owed at least as much to his fanatical zeal, as to his poems. The Inquisition, too, appointed him one of its familiars. In the midst of the homage thus rendered to his talents, he died on the twenty-sixth of August, 1635, having attained the age of seventy-three. His obsequies were celebrated with even royal pomp. Three bishops in their pontifical habits officiated for three days at the funeral of the Spanish Phoenix, as he is called in the title-page of his comedies. It has been calculated that he wrote more than twenty-one millions three hundred thousand lines, upon a hundred

and thirty-three thousand two hundred and twenty-two sheets of paper.

In examining the works of Lope de Vega, we shall pursue the same method which we have employed in our observations upon less voluminous authors, and we shall attempt to make the reader acquainted with them rather through the medium of a detailed analysis, than by judging them in the mass and by general ideas. For my own part, I am only conversant with thirty of his dramas, one tenth merely of the number which has been published, which is itself but a sixth part of those which he composed. But even this acquaintance with his writings is, I imagine, quite sufficient to enable us to form an opinion of his talents and defects.

The essence of the Spanish theatre is intrigue. In all their pieces we discover a complication of incidents, love-affairs, stratagems, and combats, which are sufficiently extraordinary, more especially if we measure them by our manners, and which it is by no means easy to follow and comprehend. It is said that strangers experience infinite difficulty in following the thread of a drama represented upon the stage of a Madrid theatre while the Spaniards themselves, who are habituated to this intrigue and romantic adventure, can trace the plot with surprising facility. The complicated structure of the plots of the Spanish dramas is so essentially connected with the literatu

of that country, that it is necessary to consider and to explain it. I shall, therefore, trace the plot of the first comedy now analysed, and which is one of the most simple in its nature. In the rest, I shall content myself with examining those portions of them which strike me as the most remarkable for ingenuity, for poetry, or for the representation of manners.

The *Discreet Revenge* (*La Discreta Vengança*) which I propose to analyse, is the first play of the twentieth volume. It is a national and historical drama, one of that class which has always appeared to me to possess the greatest portion of real merit. The scene is laid in Portugal, in the reign of Alfonso III. (1246-1279.) The hero of the piece is Don Juan de Meneses, the favorite of the King, who was compelled to defend himself against the dark intrigues of a number of envious courtiers. At the opening of the drama, he is seen with his squire Tello waiting until his cousin, Donna Anna, of whom he is enamoured, shall leave church. His rival, Don Nuño, accompanied by his friend Don Ramiro, then arrives with the same object of paying attention to the lady. At length she appears at the church-door, and, upon her happening to let her glove fall, the two gallants throw themselves forwards to catch it. This incident causes a dispute between them; angry looks pass, and defiance are interchanged. Donna Anna, in

order to prevent a quarrel, decides against her cousin in favour of Nuño, to whom, however, she is indifferent. Having dismissed her two lovers, Donna Anna returns to the stage to justify herself to Meneses, and to satisfy him that she has only preferred his rival in order to prevent a dangerous quarrel. This scene, which is a sort of exposition of the plot, is intended to give us an insight into the happy love of Meneses, his jealous disposition, and the rivalry of Nuño.

The second scene represents the council of state of king Alonzo. In the English and Spanish dramas, it is not the entry of a fresh actor which constitutes a new scene, but the re-appearance of the characters in a situation or place which has no immediate connexion with the preceding scene. Alonzo had been raised to the throne of Portugal by a party who had deposed Don Sancho his brother, a negligent, voluptuous, and incapable prince. Alonzo had been married to a French princess, (Matilda, the heiress of the county of Boulogne,) a lady of fifty years of age, while her husband was a youth. Having no children by her, and having abandoned the hope of a family, he was desirous of divorcing the princess, who had not followed him into Portugal. The reasons of state, the wish of settling the succession to the crown, on the one hand, and on the other the rights of Matilda and the gratitude, which

Alonzo owes her, are discussed in council with much dignity. Vasco Nuño and Ramiro persuade the King to demand a divorce from the Pontiff Clement IV., which the latter could not refuse. Don Juan de Meneses, on the contrary, is desirous that the King should divide all the pleasures of royalty with her from whom he derived his subsistence when he had no realm of his own. Alonzo puts an end to the discussion, which was growing warm between Nuño and Meneses, and desires the latter alone to remain, whose fidelity he had experienced in his greatest misfortunes. He informs him that he has not only determined to divorce Matilda, but to marry Beatrix, the daughter of Alfonso X. of Castile, who had offered the kingdom of Algarves as a dowry. Having selected Don Juan as his ambassador to the court of Seville, he commands him to depart the same night, and to preserve the strictest silence. Don Juan frankly avows that he feels great regret in being compelled to leave his cousin Anna de Meneses at the moment when he is disputing her love with a rival who may bear away the prize; but Alonzo promises to attend himself to the interests of his friend, and to watch over his mistress. Juan does not place such implicit confidence in this promise, as not to order his squire Tello to keep guard at night around the mansion of his beloved. He religiously preserves the secret intrusted to him, and

departs without taking leave of Donna Anna, being compelled even to neglect an appointment which she had herself made with him for that evening.

It was not without good grounds that Meneses had ordered Tello to keep guard during the night. Nuño, Ramiro, and their squire Rodrigo, approach the mansion of Donna Anna. It was the hour at which she had appointed to meet Don Juan, whom she imagines she sees in the person of Don Nuño. Tello, who is watching, contrives by an artifice to learn their names, but, as they are three to one, he does not yet dare to attack them. While he is observing them at a distance, the King, who wishes to keep his promise, and to watch over the mistress of Don Juan, appears at the bottom of the same street. Tello, without recognizing him, accosts him and requests his assistance, and a scene takes place which, whimsical as it is, from its excess of chivalric spirit, yet possesses a character of great truth and originality :

TELLO. A cavalier advances to the grate ; *
Strange as it is, I'll speak at any rate.

ALONZO. Who's there ?

TELLO. Put up your sword ! One who demands
Nought but a favour, Signor, at your hands.

ALONZO. So late, and in this lonely place address'd,
Who, think you, will attend to such request ?

TELLO. He who boasts gentle blood ; and you are he,
As in your noble countenance I see.

ALONZO. True, I'm a gentleman; and, by God's grace,
One also of a known and noble race.

TELLO. You know the laws of honour then; the best
Of all the code is to defend the oppress'd.

ALONZO. But first 'tis meet we know who's in the right.

TELLO. To cut the matter short, pray, will you fight?

ALONZO. You're not a robber! I can scarce think so,
Judging you from your cloak.

TELLO. No, marry, no.
Fear it not.

ALONZO. Well! what would you have me do?

TELLO. Behind that grating does an angel dwell,
And he who loves her left me sentinel,
To guard her safety in his absence hence.
You see those men? You see the difference:
'Tis three to one. Now, if you'll lend a hand,
I'll cudgel them till none of them can stand.

ALONZO. You've puzzled me. I am a knight, 'tis true,
And therefore am I bound to stand by you.
And yet, methinks, 'tis indiscreet in us
To meddle in a stranger's quarrel thus.

TELLO. Pho! never fear! let but the rascals see
That I have got another man with me,
I'll settle them, though three or thirty-three.

ALONZO. Fear! in my life I never yet knew fear!
I only dread our enemies should hear
Of this adventure, and should say of it
That it displays our rashness, not our wit.
Tell me his name whose place to-night you fill,
I promise I'll stick by you, come what will.

TELLO. Exceeding good—you promise—his name is
Don Juan de Meneses.

ALONZO. Why then this
Most lucky is; his dearest friend am I;
So take your sword, we'll strike them instantly.

TELLO. You gentlemen there ! peeping through the blind,
March off ! or I shall break your heads, you 'll find.

NUÑO. Pray are you arm'd to carry the thing through ?

TELLO. Arm'd ! like the devil.

RODRIGO. Kill the rascal, do. (*they fight.*)

TELLO. Now help, Sir Knight.

RODRIGO. The bully fights, I swear !

NUÑO. Forbear, or you 'll disgrace this house,—forbear !

TELLO. A coward's poor excuse !

ALONZO. Follow them not.

TELLO. Oh let me kiss a thousand times the spot
On which you stand. Could but the king have seen
Your valorous deeds, you shortly would have been
His general at Ceuta.

ALONZO. Sir, my rank

Is such, that at his table I have drank.

TELLO. What feints ! what thrusts ! what quickness ! and
what fire !

May I not know what I so much desire,
Your name ?

ALONZO. I 'd really tell you, had I power ;
Come to the palace your first vacant hour.

TELLO. But if I come, how shall I know you then ?

ALONZO. Give me some trifle that you prize not ; when
You see me next, I 'll hand it you again.

TELLO. I 've nought about me that is useless. Yes,
I 've got my purse which very useless is,
For it is always empty—here, take this !

ALONZO. What, empty !

TELLO. Ay, good Signor : squires like me
Boast very little silver, as you see.

We may easily imagine that a very diverting
scene occurs in the second act, when the king

restores his purse to Tello, and thus discloses his name. The monarch enquires whether Tello is willing to receive a present; and the squire answers him by saying, that when his father died he gave particular directions that one hand should be left out of the grave, in order that he might be able to receive what any one might be disposed to give him. The king then bestows a pension upon him and the dignity of an Alcalde of St. John, to which office is attached the privilege of having a key to every fortress.

In the second act Don Juan de Meneses returns to Portugal with Beatrix of Castile. This princess, the most amiable and beautiful woman of her age, feels as lively a passion for Alonzo as that with which the monarch is himself inspired. With the approbation of the council of state the marriage is celebrated (1262,) before a dispensation for that purpose has been obtained from Rome. The attachment of Alonzo to Beatrix only strengthens the gratitude which he feels towards Meneses. To him he confides the direction of all his affairs. Every petitioner is referred to him; and the jealousy of the courtiers is thus augmented and confirmed. His ruin is sworn by all; and they attempt to destroy him by the most perfidious artifice. Nuño, above all, endeavours to wound him in the tenderest point. He demands from the king the hand of Donna °

Anna de Meneses. - He already possesses the approbation of her father, and he promises to procure her own consent under her hand. Don Juan undertakes to offer no opposition to their union, provided he is furnished with this proof of the infidelity of his mistress. Nuño deceitfully procures a paper by which Donna Anna appears to give her consent. The jealousy of the two lovers is thus raised to the highest pitch; but a meeting and an explanation take place, and they mutually forgive one another.

In the third act Nuño attempts to awaken the jealousy of Donna Anna, by persuading her that Don Juan is in love with Inez, one of the maids of honour to the queen; whilst his friend Don Ramiro addresses her, and makes proposals of marriage as if from Don Juan. Inez receives the overture with great joy, and announces it to the queen. This news reaches the ears of Donna Anna on every side, and in an interview with her lover, instead of soothing him, she excites him to challenge Don Nuño. She tells him that when she prevented a quarrel formerly, her love only was in question, but that now her jealousy is awakened; that his danger is nothing in comparison with her sufferings; and that she can no longer listen to the voice of prudence. Before Don Juan is able to meet Nuño, a fresh intrigue at court exposes him to the greatest danger.

The pontiff refuses the dispensation for the divorce of the king and his marriage with Beatrix. The king and the princess are overwhelmed. The Countess of Boulogne being unwilling that her marriage should be dissolved, had written to Rome to oppose the divorce. The enemies of Don Juan present to the king a forged letter, as from the Countess to Juan, in order to establish an understanding between those parties, and to induce a belief that* the favourite had been secretly intriguing at Rome against the king and queen. Alonzo is enraged at the idea of being betrayed by his friend. He orders him to be arrested, and without examination or hearing he condemns him to death. The office of arresting him is given to his enemies, and Don Juan is taken into custody by the hands of Ramiro. The scene in which Don Juan is arrested, is exceedingly fine. The speech of Don Juan is full of noble poetry.

* JUAN. I yield me to the king's commands, nor fear
To lose the royal favour, on his truth
Securely resting. From these prison walls,
Like Joseph, shall I step victoriously
In glory. Yet I grieve, noble Ramiro,

Obedezco del rey el mandamiento ;
No triste de perder del rey la gracia,
Porque de mi verdad estoy seguro,
Que saldré de esta carcel con vitoria,
Y será de Joseph corona y gloria.

My tongue may utter not what my heart would—
You understand me.

RAM. All things have their end,
And so shall thy captivity, and then
Fair answer will I grant thee if thou seek'st it.

JUAN. So be it, and these words of thine shall be
My consolation.

VASCO. It is little fitting
To cast defiance at the very moment
When you are rendering up your sword; and yet
Methinks it hath not shed such blood in Afric
That it should blanch the cheek of bold Ramiro.

JUAN. Vasco de Acuña, I do marvel not
At these adverse mutations of my fortune,
But yet I do admire to see ye three
Building ambitious hopes upon my ruin,
Because the king is but a man, and ye

Pero de no poder, Ramiro noble,
Dezirte las palabras que pensaba,
Que tu me entiendes ya.

RAMIRO. Todo se acaba,
Y esta prizion se acabará muy presto;
Y a responderte me hallarás dispuesto,
Sempre que tu quisieres.

JUAN. Pues, yo tomo
Essa palabra por consuelo mio.

VASCO. No es tiempo de tratar de desafio,
Quando por fuerça has de dexas la espada.
Ni pienso que en Africa bañada
Se vio de tanta sangre, que amenace
Cavalleros que son como Ramiro.

JUAN. Vasco de Acuña, nunca yo me admiro
De las adversidades de fortuna:
Admirome de ver que estecys haziendo

Think to deceive him. Maugre all the envy
 Bred in you by his favours shewn to me,
 All of you know how well this sword, which now
 I render up, has served the king at Coimbra,
 And at Algarves, too, if not in Afric.
 But wherefore do I weakly tax myself
 To satisfy your furious hate? There, take it;
 But know that speedily ye all shall pay me
 For this foul injury.

NUNO. Wert thou not prisoner

. Thou wouldst not thus have boasted.

JUAN. My good friend Nuño, be not so hard with me.

RAMIRO. Advance! March forward, guard.

JUAN. Tello!

TELLO. My Lord!

JUAN. Tello, remember you relate this scenc.

Lances los tres en mi, porque os parezca
 Que el rey es hombre, y que engañar se puede.
 La embidia queteney's de que me estime;
 Esta espada que os doy, bien sabeys todos
 Que en Coymbra servió, y en los Algarbes,
 Si en el África no, mas que me canso
 En dar satisfacion a vuestra furia!
 Tomad la, y estad ciertos que esta injuria
 Me pagarcys muy presto.

NUNO. A no estar preso

No hablaras tan sobervio.

JUAN. Nuño amigo

Menos rigor.

RAMIRO. Camina, alerta guarda.

JUAN. Tello.

TELLO. Senor!

JUAN. Diras lo sucedido.

The biting taunt of Nuño, who reproaches Juan with presuming not on his strength, but on his weakness, could not be put into the mouth of any man who was not highly sensitive upon the point of honour. In fact, the traitors of the Spanish stage are never cowards like those of the Italian. The public would not have suffered so shameful a representation.

The energetic love of Anna de Meneses succeeds in delivering Juan from prison. This she accomplishes through the means of the faithful Tello, who held the key of the fortress, and by the zeal of Inez, who fearlessly exposes herself on behalf of him whom she believes her lover. Donna Anna and Juan experience a peculiar pleasure in availing themselves of these deceitful practices, and as soon as the latter is at liberty, instead of attempting to justify himself, he turns upon his enemies their own arms. By his procurement, certain forged letters are conveyed to the king, from which it would appear that the enemies of Don Juan have been guilty of the very treasons with which he had been charged. The hostile courtiers are, consequently exiled, and Juan is restored to favour, while the general satisfaction is augmented by the news which at this time arrives of the death of the Countess of Boulogne, by which the legality of the nuptials between Alonzo and Beatrix is firmly established.

I fear that this long analysis of a comedy of Lope de Vega may be thought both fatiguing and obscure; and that it may be said that too much attention has been bestowed upon a work which probably did not cost its author more than four and twenty hours. It appeared to me, however, that this was the only mode in which I could give an idea of the peculiar invention and effect of Lope's comedies, and of the new character which he gave to the Spanish drama. His plays are no less removed from the perfection of the romantic writers than from that of the authors of antiquity. Nothing else could be expected from the unexampled velocity with which he wrote. Some of his productions are very rudely composed, though generally lighted up with some sparks of genius. It was by these brilliant traces of superior talent, as well as by the wonderful fecundity of his pen, that Lope de Vega wrought so great a change in the dramatic literature of his country. Cervantes had originated the idea of a grand and severe style of tragedy; but after the appearance of Lope, neither tragedy nor comedy, properly speaking, were to be found. Novels and romances usurped the Spanish stage. A Spanish comedy, as Bouterwek justly remarks, is properly a dramatic novel: like a novel, its interest may be either of a tragic, or comic, or historical nature, or it may be purely poetical. The rank of the characters

cannot assign the class to which it belongs. Princes and potentates, in their places, contribute to the carrying on of the plot, as well as valets and lovers, and they are all mingled together whenever the exigencies of the story render it probable. Neither the keeping of character, nor a satirical vein, is essential either to the Spanish drama or to the novel. The burlesque and the tender, the vulgar and the pathetic, may be mingled together without destroying the spirit of the piece, for the object of the poet is not to keep alive any one certain emotion. He does not attempt to give a longer duration to the interest or, to the emotion of the spectators than to their laughter. The whole piece turns upon a complicated intrigue, which excites their attention and curiosity; and he thus fills his historical plays with the most extraordinary adventures, and his sacred dramas with miracles.

The comedies of this nation, which have appeared since the age of Lope de Vega, may be classed under the distinctive heads of sacred and profane. The latter branch may be again subdivided into heroic, historical, or mythological, and *comedies of the cloak and the sword*, which depict the fashionable manners and pursuits of the day. The sacred comedies represent either the lives of saints or sacramental acts. Of these two classes the first is constructed on the model of the mysteries, which were anciently

performed in the monasteries, while the latter is almost entirely confined to allegorical subjects intended to celebrate the feast of the Holy Sacrament. In course of time, to these different classes of dramatic performances were added a kind of prologue, called a commendation, *loa*, and interludes, *entremeses*, which, when accompanied with music and dancing, were termed *saynetes*.

In the comedies of the cloak and the sword, or, as they might properly be called, of intrigue, Lope has scarcely regarded probability in the order and connexion of his scenes. His chief object was to excite interest by the situations in which his characters were placed, and by the working up of his plot. One intrigue is interwoven with another, and the intricacy of the plot increases, until the author, to terminate the whole, cuts asunder all the knots which he cannot otherwise unravel, and marries all the couples who present themselves to him as candidates for that ceremony. Reflections and maxims of prudence are frequently to be met with in the course of his comedies, but morality, strictly so called, is never introduced into them. The public for whom he wrote would not have permitted him to dilate on a subject with which they conceived that they were sufficiently edified, from the pulpit. His gallantry, on which every intrigue is founded, is of the most extravagant

nature. Not the slightest regard is paid to its *décorum* ; and if it is partially regulated by the principles of honour, it is never influenced by those of morality. When the passions are portrayed, they possess all the character of the impetuous temperament of the nation. In the reveries of his lovers, Lope exhibits a fund of romantic declamation, and of *jeux d'esprit*, quite inexhaustible. "*Love excuses every thing*" was the maxim of the fashionable inhabitants of Madrid ; and, on the authority of this adage, all kinds of deceptions, perfidies of the basest nature, and the most scandalous intrigues, are represented without any reserve. His cavaliers draw their swords on every trifling occasion ; and to inflict a wound or even death upon their adversaries is considered as a circumstance of very little moment.

The sacred pieces of Lope de Vega depict, in very faithful colours, the religious spirit of his times, and in common with his other works, present an exact picture of the prevailing manners. They are a strange mixture of catholic piety, of fantastic imagination, and of noble poetry. The Lives of the Saints possess more dramatic effect than the Sacramental Acts ; but, on the other hand, the religious mysteries in the latter are expressed, by means of the allegories, with greater dignity. Of all the dramatic works of Lope the Lives of the Saints are written with the least

observance of the rules. In them we discover the most incongruous union of characters. Allegorical personages, buffoons, saints, countrymen, scholars, kings, the infant Christ, God the Father, the devil, and all the heterogeneous beings which the most grotesque imagination can conceive, are here made to act and to converse together.

All these pieces are, at present, known by the general designation of the *Gran Comedia*, or the *Comedia famosa*, whether the event is fortunate or unfortunate, comic or tragic. Yet in the edition of his dramatic works which Lope himself published, we find several pieces distinguished by the name of tragedies. Of these, the fable was in general borrowed from antiquity. Lope seemed to imagine, that no modern action was sufficiently dignified to deserve the title of tragic. But these pieces possess neither a grander developement, nor deeper emotions, nor a more elevated strain of language, to authorize the distinction. The style is universally the same. The author has endeavoured to render it poetical, but not to give it an air of grandeur. He has enriched it with the most brilliant images, and has adorned it by the efforts of his imagination, but he has failed either to dignify it, or to give it an uniform elevation. His characters speak like poets, not like men of distinguished rank; and in whatever tone they commence their conversation, they never preserve it. There are two,

pieces of Lope de Vega which bear the name of tragedies ; one is entitled *The Burning of Rome, or Nero* ; the other, *The most intrepid Husband, or Orpheus*, both of which must be ranked amongst his very worst productions, and deserve no attention.

Notwithstanding the harshness and coarse style which distinguish most of the dramas of Lope de Vega, it cannot be said that the reader is ever fatigued by their perusal, that the action flags, or that we feel that languor and impatience which are almost invariably occasioned by the inferior tragedies of French authors of the second rank. Our curiosity is awakened by the rapidity of action, by the multiplicity of events, by the increasing confusion, and by the impossibility of foreseeing the developement ; and it is preserved in all its vivacity from the first scene to the conclusion. His pieces are often open to severe criticism, and indeed they are sometimes even below criticism ; yet they uniformly excite a desire to discover the event. It is probably to his art of explaining all the circumstapces by the acts of his characters, that Lope owes this advantage. He always opens his scenes by some imposing event, which forcibly attracts and captivates the attention of the spectator. His performers proceed to action immediately on their entering the stage, and he discloses their characters more fully by their conduct than by a re-

cital of anterior occurrences. The curiosity is awakened by his busy scenes, whilst we are generally inattentive during the recitals which explain the French pieces ; and yet an attention to these recitals is absolutely requisite in order to understand the whole drama.

In the piece which we have just analysed, the quarrel between Don Juan de Meneses and Nuño his rival, strikes the spectators by its vivacity, by the fear of some impending danger, and by the interest which Anna de Meneses takes in appeasing them. His principal characters have already been displayed, each circumstance is developed in its proper place, so that there is no need of any other exposition. The two dramas of Lope de Vega which follow that which we have just mentioned, partake of the same Spanish and chivalric character, and possess the same merit. The poet always attracts the eyes, and commands the attention, of his audience, from the commencement of the piece. In *Lo Cierto por lo Dudoso* ; *The Certain for the Doubtful*, a drama founded on the jealous rivalry of Don Pedro king of Castile, and his brother Don Henry, both of whom are enamoured of Donna Juana, daughter of the Adelantado of Castile, the scene opens in the streets of Seville in the midst of the festivals and rejoicings on the eve of Saint John. The jocund strains of musi-

cal instruments and of the voice are heard on every side; dances are made up before the audience; the nobility of the kingdom partake in the diversions of the people, or avail themselves of that opportunity to carry on their intrigues: and at last Don Henry and Don Pedro are introduced in a manner sufficiently striking to awaken general curiosity. Each of them recognizes the other, whilst endeavouring to obtain access to the house of his mistress, and they mutually attempt to conceal themselves from each other.

In the following play, *Pobreza no es vileza; Poverty is no Crime*: in which the scene is laid in Flanders during the wars of Philip II., and under the government of the Count de Fuentes, the commencement is in the highest degree attractive and romantic. Rosela, a Flemish lady of high birth, has retired to her gardens at a short distance from Brussels. She is there attacked by four Spanish soldiers, who, long deprived of their pay and enraged by hunger, attempt to rob her of her jewels. Mendoza, the hero of the piece, who was serving as a private soldier in the same army, unexpectedly arrives, meanly appavelled. He defends the Flemish lady, recovers her jewels, and conducts her to a place of safety. Having gained her affections by this generous action, he confides to her care his

sister, who has accompanied him to Flanders, and he departs to the siege of Catelet, with the Count de Fuentes.

Lope de Vega appears to have studied the history of Spain, and to have been filled with a noble enthusiasm for the glory of his country, which he incessantly endeavours to support. His dramas cannot be strictly called historical, like those of Shakspeare; that is to say, he has not selected the great events of the state, so as to form a political drama; but he has connected a romantic intrigue with the most glorious occurrences in the records of Spain, and has so interwoven romance with history, that eulogies on the heroes of his nation become an essential and inseparable part of his poems. It was not to afford the audience the pleasure of witnessing a ridiculous battle, as in the effeminate theatre in Italy, that the siege of Catelet, in which Mendoza distinguished himself, is partly displayed on the stage; it was for the purpose of affording the Count de Fuentes, in arraying his army, the opportunity of rendering to each of his officers, and to each of his brave warriors, that tribute of glory which posterity has accorded to them. Although these pieces are inferior to many others in point of composition, yet the patriotic sentiments of the author, and his zeal for the glory of his nation, give them a deeper interest than is

possessed by those which are more distinguished by poetical beauties.

In the faithful picture of Spanish manners which he has presented to us, the most striking and most incomprehensible feature is the extreme susceptibility of Spanish honour. The slightest coquetry of a mistress, of a wife, or of a sister, is an insult to the lover, the husband, or the brother, which can only be obliterated by blood. This mad jealousy was communicated to the Spanish by the Arabians. Its existence amongst the latter, and indeed amongst all Oriental nations, may easily be accounted for, because it is in accordance with their national habits. They keep the female sex in close confinement; they never pronounce their names, ~~nor~~ do they ever seek any intercourse with them until they have them absolutely in their power. Indulging only emotions of love and of jealousy in their harams, they seem in every other place to forget the existence of the sex. The manners of the Spaniards are entirely opposite. Their whole lives are consecrated to gallantry. Every individual is enamoured of some woman who is not in his power, and makes no scruple of entering into the most indelicate intrigues to gratify his passions. The most virtuous heroines make assignations in the night-time, at their chamber windows; they receive and write billets; and they go out masked to meet their lovers in the house of a third per-

son. So completely is this gallantry supported by the spirit of chivalry, that when a married woman is pursued by her husband or by her father, she invokes the first person whom she chances to meet, without knowing him or disclosing herself to him. She requests him to protect her from her impertinent pursuers, and the stranger thus called upon cannot, without dishonouring himself, refuse to draw his sword to procure for this unknown female a liberty perhaps criminal. He, however, who thus hazards his life to secure the flight of a coquette, who has himself made many assignations and written billets, would be seized with unappeasable fury if he discovered that his own sister had inspired any person with love, had entertained that passion for another, or had taken any of those liberties which are authorized by universal custom. Such a circumstance would be a sufficient motive in his eyes to put to death both his sister and the man who had ventured to speak to her of love.

The theatre of Spain every where affords us examples of the practical application of this singular law of honour. Besides various pieces of Lope de Vega, many of those of Calderon, and amongst others the *Lady Spectre*, and *The Devotion of the Cross*, place in the clearest light the contrast between the jealous fury of a husband or a brother, and the protection which they them-

selves afford to any masked damsel who may ask it; who, as it often happens, is one of the identical persons they would have the greatest desire to restrain if they had known her. But the argument which a Castilian philosopher advances against these sanguinary manners in a comedy of an anonymous author of the Court of Philip IV. is still more extraordinary. A judge is speaking of a husband who has put his wife to death :

Our worldly laws he has obey'd,
But not those laws which God has made.
My other self, now, is my wife;
It is then clear, that if my life
I must not take, I cannot do
That violence to her. 'Tis true,
Man very rarely can controul
The impulse which first moves his soul.*

A singular morality, which would prohibit murder, only when it resembles suicide !

* El montañés Juan Pasqual. y primer asistente de Sevilla, de un ingenio de la corte.

Complio con duelos del mundo '
Mas no con leyes del cielo ;
Mi muger es otro yo :
Y pues yo a mi no me debo
Dar la muerte, claro està
Que a ella tampoco. Ya veo
Que raro es el que es señor
De su primer movimiento.

In *Lo Cierto por lo Dudoso** of Lope de Vega, Donna Juana prefers Don Henry to his brother the king, Don Pedro. To him she remains constant in spite of the passion of the monarch, who was neither less amiable, less young, nor less captivating. She endeavours in various ways to make known her attachment to Don Henry; and at last, when the king is on the point of receiving her hand, she begs to speak to him alone, hoping to free herself from him by a singular artifice.

JUANA. Don Pedro, I have ventured to confide
 In your known valour and your generous wisdom,
 'To speak with you thus frankly. You must know,
 Don Henry did address me, and I answer'd
 His suit, though with a grave and modest carriage.
 Never from him heard I unfitting words;
 Never from him did I receive a line
 'Trenching upon mine honour; yet, believe me,
 If I have answer'd not your love, I have
 A deeper motive than you think of. Listen!
 But no! how can I tell such circumstances,
 And yet the hazard only may be blamed—
 Doth not my cheek grow pale?

THE KING. Oh, I am lost!
 Juana, I am lost! my love begets
 A thousand strange chimeras. What shall I
 Believe of this thy treachery—of thy honour?
 Oh speak, nor longer torture me; I know
 The hazards wherewith lovers are environ'd.

* [This Drama has been lately revived and acted at Madrid. Tr.]

JUANA. I seek choice words, and the disguise of rhetoric,
And yet the simple truth will best excuse me.
I and Don Henry (he was speaking to me)
Descended the great staircase of the palace—
I cannot tell it—will you let me write it?

THE KING. No, tarry not, my patience is exhausted.

JUANA. I said we did descend the staircase.—No,
Not the doom'd criminal can be more moved
Than I am at this tale.

THE KING. In God's name, hasten!

JUANA. Wait but a little while.

THE KING. You torture me.

JUANA. Nay, I will tell you all.

THE KING. Oh, end the tale!
My blood creeps through each artery drop by drop.
JUANA. Alas! my lord, my crime was very light.
Well, Henry then approach'd me.

THE KING. Well! and then?

JUANA. His mouth ('twas by some fatal accident)
Met mine. Perchance he only sought to speak;
But in the obscurity of night he did
Unwittingly do this discourtesy.
Now then you know the hidden fatal reason
Why I can never be your wife.

THE KING. I know,
Juana, that this tale is the mere coinage
Of your own brain. I know too, that Don Henry
Hath not yet sought his exile, that he lingers
In Seville, plotting how to injure me.
I know that they will say it ill becomes
One of my rank to struggle for your love;
That wise men, and that fools will all agree
In telling me I have forgot my honour.
But I am wounded. Jealousy and love
Have blinded me; I equally despise

The wise man and the fool, and only seek
To satisfy the injury I feel.
Vengeance exists not undebased with fury,
Nor love untainted by the breath of folly.
This night will I assassinate Don Henry,
And he being dead, I will espouse thee. Then
Thou never canst compare his love with mine.
'Tis true that while he lives I can't espouse thee,
Seeing that my dishonour lives in him
Who hath usurp'd the place reserved for me ;
But while I thus avenge this crime, I feel
That it hath no reality, and yet
Though thine adventure be all false, invented
To make me yield my wishes and renounce
My marriage, it suffices that it hath
Been only told to me, to seal my vengeance ;
Or if love makes me credit aught of it,
Henry shall die and I will wed his widow ;
Then though the tale thou tellest were discover'd,
Thine honour and mine own will be uninjur'd.

It is neither a tyrant nor a madman who speaks.
Don Pedro resolves to commit fratricide, not
like a monster, but like a Spaniard, delicate
upon the point of honour. He despatches assassins
by different routes to discover his brother. In
the mean time, Don Henry marries Juana ; and
the King, when he thus finds the evil without
remedy and his honour unimpaired, pardons the
two lovers.

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